

THE  
MYSTICALL MATCH  
BETWEEN  
Christ and his Church.

BY  
The late learned and reverend Divine.  
JOHN PRESTON,  
Docter in Divinity, Chaplain in Ordinary to his Majestie,  
Master of *Emanuel Colledge in Cambridge,*  
and sometimes Preacher at *Lincolnes Inne.*

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The leading Sermon to that Treatise of his  
called  
The Churches Marriage.

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CANT. 6. 3.  
*I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine.*

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THE  
MYSTICAL MATCH

BETWEEN

Christ and his Church

The late learned and reverend Doctor

JOHN FLEET

Author of many other works, and of the  
"Mystical Marriage" between Christ and his Church.

These have been now translated into English

The Churches Marriage

By

Thomas, Dean of the Cathedral of St. Paul



LONDON

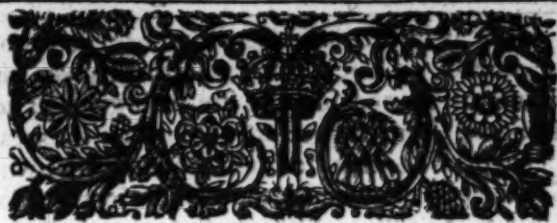
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### Thine in any Christian office

T S.





# THE CHVRCHES MARRIAGE.

EPHES. 5. 32.

*This is a great mystery, but I speake concerning Christ  
and concerning the Church.*



HE poynt out of these words is this, that,

*There is a match between  
Christ and the Church: and  
consequently, betweene  
Christ and every parti-  
cular man that is a mem-  
ber of the true body of  
Christ; this is the great*

Mystery the Apostle tells us of in this place. To open which, let us consider wherein this match consisteth, what similitude it hath with the ordinary marriage which is betweene a man and his wife here upon earth, it consisteth in these five things.

*Doct.*

There is a  
match be-  
tweene  
Christ and  
the Church

*It consisteth  
in five  
things.*

A a

First,

1 Consent  
of Parents.

Ephes. 1.

First, as in marriage there must bee consent of the parents, so here, the Father hath given his Sonne to us, and likewise hee hath given us to the Sonne; wherein wee are to consider the great mercy of God, that hee would bestow his owne Sonne upon us, which is the reason why the Apostle saith in *Ephes. 1.* *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Iesus Christ, that hath blessed us with all spirituall blessings in heavenly things in Christ,* that is, that hath given us his owne Sonne, and with him all things else, and Him likewise *for us*, when we were cast away men. That thus he should give us to his Son, and match us with him, that is the first thing.

2 Consent  
of parties.

The second thing in marriage, is the mutuall consent of the parties themselves that are to match together, wherein wee are in the first place to consider, the consent of the Sonne, *the Husband*, because wee know that the man is the suitor, hee begins, and if hee had not, who could have knowne the minde of the LORD IESUS, that he would match so lowe, that hee would match with sinfull dust and ashes, except himselfe had declared it, his Church seekes not first to him, not because modesty forbids it, but because shee knew no such thing, that there was such an Husband for her; shee indeed had most neede to seeke, because shee stood in neede of such an Husband, Christ matches with her, not for any neede he had of a wife, but onely for the neede his wife had of him. Now his Father from eternity had ordained this Wife for his Sonne, and therefore hee must have her, and

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and he could have no other. Therefore, first see if the Sonne bee willing, for this hee hath declared it plainly in his Word. *Wee are Ambassadors*, saith the Apostle, *2 Cor. 5. beseeching you in Christs stead, to bee reconciled to God*, and in *Matth. 22. you see all were invited to the Marriage*, and all those speeches; *Goe preach the Gospell to every creature under heaven, and Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden*: and that in *Revel. 22. Let whosoever will come*; this I say, declares the consent of the Sonne that he is willing.

<sup>1</sup> Christs consent.

<sup>2</sup> Cor. 5. Matth. 22.

Revel. 22.

Now, secondly for our consent, wee have that wrought by the holy Ghost, by a double worke.

<sup>2</sup> Our consent wrought.

<sup>1</sup> By discovering our danger.

One is a worke of the holy Ghost, discovering to us the thraldome, and bondage, the death and danger wherein wee are, and also discovering to us our owne sinfulness, which is necessary, because a man is ready to bee conceited of himselfe, and so is somewhat coy, and unwilling to yeeld to the suit of Christ, but when the holy Ghost hath shewed a man what hee is, that he is such a one as hee never thought himselfe to be, he then begins to think, that hee is unworthy that the Lord should vouchsafe him so much favour; he is ready to say as *Abigail* said to *David*, when she was spoken to, to bee his wife, Lord what am I, that thou shouldest so far respect mee? *Let thy handmaid wash the feete of my Lords servants*, I am worthy of no better office; I say, this is one worke of the holy Ghost, thus to prepare us to this match.

The other is to present Christ unto us, and to sit him above all the world for us in our apprehen-

<sup>2</sup> Presenting Christ.

sions, which is done by the work of the holy Ghost manifesting Christ, and his beauty; when Christ comes to joyne our love, hee is faine to use his skill to joyne us: and all that wee can doe to set him at, is nothing, except the holy Ghost shew you Iesus Christ, and except withall, hee make a secret impression upon the heart, except there bee a secret instinct wrought in us, causing us to long after Christ, we shall never bring our hearts to consent to this Marriage. Now therefore, as there goes a secret vertue from the Load-stone, that makes a secret impression upon the iron, and when that is done, the iron rests not, but drawes neare to the Load-stone, so the holy Ghost that is sent from the Father, makes an impression upon our spirits, that wee have no rest till wee obtaine Christ. This is called in Scripture, a *Drawing to Christ*; *None comes to me except the Father draw him*, that is, except the Father worke powerfully upon him, and make him willing to come: for that is the meaning of drawing, when the Lord turnes as it were the will of a Lion, makes him a Lamb, when he gives another will.

What consent it must be.

This consent must not bee mentall onely, kept within the breast, but there must bee an expression of this consent, and it is in a mutuall-covenant; so then the third thing is the *Covenant* betwene Christ and us, which is an everlasting covenant on both sides, an everlasting covenant on Christs part to bee ours, to bestow himselfe on us and all that is his, whether salvation, remission of sinnes, sanctification, glory, his death, obedience, all he

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heedid or is, all is ours: and againe, a covenant on our part, to give up our selves to him, and this for ever, and all that is ours: as our sinnes are made his, so all the good wee receive from him, wee promise to imploy to his service. Now, this is but as the *Esponsals*:

The fourth is that *union* that followes upon this, and the solemne celebration of the Marriage which is done in Baptisme, when you were asked this question, even as it is in ordinary marriage, Will you have this man to your wedded husband, will you take him for better and for worse, will you bee content to renounce all others and to bee alone to him, to serve and obey him? so in Baptisme it was ask't: Will you bee content to deny ungodlinesse, and worldly lusts, to renounce the world, the flesh and the Devill? &c. When men were of riper yeeres and converted, this was answered to by word of mouth from the party himselfe, and now when you are baptized young, it is even as it is in marriages which are made when the parties are under-age, which when they come to age they use not to disavow, but are obliged to confirme it: of that force is Baptisme unto us. This I say, is the solemnizing as it were of the nuptials betweene Christ and us, when we are baptized into his Name, when wee leave the former name that wee had before; as a wife doth, wee forsake father and mother and cleave to him, so that a man is no more *sui juris*, but is given up to this Husband, to live after his will, to bee subject to him in all things, and take him even as hee taketh us; hee takes us to

4 Vayon.



keepe us in sickenesse and in health, not to cast us off, notwithstanding our infirmities, but to keepe to us and communicate himselfe alone to us, and not to reprobate men cast off; so we take him with all crosses and afflictions, that attend the profession of him, to follow him through thicke and thinne, as well in adversity as in prosperity, to keepe the soule chaste to him, and not to prostitute it to any lust or any creature.

5 Consequents of it.

The last, is the consequents of this Marriage and union, wee have part in his goods, whatsoever is his, is ours, and ours is made his, our debts are made his, and againe, all his honours and riches, and priviledges are made ours, there is an union betweene the parties, *My beloved is mine, and I am his*, and then we have interest in all that is his.

Wee come now to apply this, and make some use of it.

*Vse I.*

To see that wee have Christ himselfe ere we apply his benefits.

First, if there be such a match, betweene Christ and every beleever, so that no man is partaker of any thing that is Christs, except hee hath him first; then take heede of applying the benefits of Christ preposterously to thy selfe, for except thou have him first, it is but a vaine conceit to thinke any thing of his belongs to thee, to thinke of remission of sinnes and adoption, and all the priviledges, and to apply them to thy selfe, and to thinke when thou art but once perswaded of it, to thinke so, that they are presently thine, I say, this is but a meare dreame and conceit, except thou bee married to Christ, that thou have the Lord himselfe, thou hast nothing to doe with any thing



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thing that is his, *Hee that hath the Sonne hath life*, and all things pertaining to life and Godlinesse, but hee *that hath not the Sonne*, hath nothing, neither *life*, nor any thing else. Therefore that you bee not deceived, you must looke on this as the ground of all your comfort: am I married to *Christ*? Is the match made betweene me and him? if it bee not, know that whatsoever thou thinkest of forgiveness of sinnes, of any blessing, spirituall or temporall that it is thine, thou dost but deceive thy selfe therein with vaine words, it is not thy perswasion, that makes the match, this is a poynt of great weight, therefore examine thy selfe strictly herein.

You will say, how shall I know it?

I answer, you shall know it by this.

First, consider whether thou have the consent of the Sonne: for that is the first thing, as was said, thou must consider, whether the Sonne have given his consent our no: Now it is true that in the word he hath declared his consent, but dost thou beleewe that? hast thou applied this word to thy selfe? there are two things which beare record with the Sonne that he is willing to match with us, and that is the Word and the Spirit: and consider if both have come home to thy heart yea or no, to testifie this.

First, I say, Christ hee hath declared his will to match with us in his Word: for though there be no particular promise to *John* or *Thomas*, or to any particular man, to say Christ is willing to marry

Aa 4      thee

*Quest.*

*Ans.*

How to know wee are matched to Christ.

1 By Christes consent which is accompanied.

1 With the Word.

thee, yet there is the generall that includes the particular, as wee finde the substance of this generall, *All that receive him shall bee saved*; then sayes the Soule, but I am one that am contained under this generall, this generall speakes to mee as well, and that as surely and as certainly, as if a Messenger were sent from heaven to assure me that the Son is willing to match with mee, for thou must looke what ground thy faith hath had, whether thou didst finde such a word as this, and whether thou canst apply it to thy selfe, and hast laid hold upon it, and by resting on it, hast put thy seale to it, that God is true in such a speech as this: For you must know my beloved, that Faith must have a word, that is the proper object of Faith, for if Faith had nothing else for its object but a persuasion, or fancy of our owne, faith were but a weak thing, for it would alter according to the object and ground upon which it is pitched: now a mans owne opinion it is changeable, and mutable, but therefore we are said to be *rooted and grounded in faith* because it hath a sure foundation, there is a rocke for faith to bee built on, which the gates of Hell cannot prevaile against: now the rock upon which faith is built, it is the Word of God, so that that faith, whereby thou beleevest thou art justified, that thou art grafted into Christ, that thou art matched with him, that he is become thy Husband, I say even that faith of thine must have a Word of God to be grounded upon, thou must finde something in the Word that must testifie to thee that Christ is willing to match with thee, for you know there is

no match without mutuall consent, and therefore the first thing when thou comcest to bee married to him, is to know that there is such a match, and that the Sonne is willing to match with thee.

Now how should any man in the world know that, except he declare himselfe? and how canst thou know hee hath declared it, but from some word, from somewhat that he hath revealed in the Scripture, to which all those places that I named before doe serve, *Goe preach the Gospell to every creature under heaven, and Come unto mee all yee that are weary and heavy laden, &c.* and wee are Ambassadors beseeching you to bee reconciled. These and the like are the sure Word of God upon which thy faith must bee grounded, so that thou comcest to say thus to thy selfe, well, whatsoever come of it, I am sure *there is a corner stone, on which whosoever is built, shall not be ashamed* nor deceived, I am sure of it from a word that the Lord hath confirmed with a seale, and with an oath, and therefore I rest upon it. And it is not a bare word, that Christ hath given to assure us of this, which is a signe it is a hard thing for us to beleeeve it, it is no easie thing, for there is added to the word a seale, and it is confirmed with an oath, so then that is the first thing thou art to consider, whether thy faith hath beene pitcht upon som such word, and whether thou hast applied that word to thy selfe or no.

In the next place beside this word, there is a witnesse from the spirit, there is a wondrous worke of the Holy Ghost, which *saith to a mans heart, bee of good comfort, feare not, I am thy salvation.* If you say

Mat. 11.1  
2 Cor. 5.19.

2 The spirit

say to me what needs the witnesse of the spirit? is not the Word enough? if Christ declare himselfe so farre that in plaine tearmes he is willing to march with us, what need the speciall witnesse of the Holy Ghost?

*Answ.*

Necessity of  
the witnesse  
of the spirit.

I answer, there is very great neede of it, because the Word of it selfe is not able to comfort, and quicken and releeve us, it is not able to beget in us peace, and joy, and righteousnesse, but it is even like a dead letter, it is a cold dead thing, able to doe nothing with the heart of man without the Spirit, this we finde by experience, the clearest arguments, and the most comfortable that the Scripture useth to comfort a man in distresse that hath his Conscience troubled with the apprehension of his sin, and of Gods wrath, they are all nothing till it please God to send his owne Spirit to beare witness to a mans spirit.

*Quest.*

You will say, what is this witnesse of the Spirit?

*Answ.*

Witnesses  
of the spirit  
what.

I answer, it is a certaine divine expression of Christ to the soule, whereby a man is secretly assured without any argument or reason, that hee is his salvation: for you must know, that there are indeede two things besides that confirme this truth to us, that is, the ground wee have in the Word, and the effects and fruits of sanctification, but both these doe it by way of argument; for when a man argueth thus, I see this generall proposition, *All that believe shall bee saved*, but I am one that believe, therefore I am one that am contained under the generall pardon; this I say,

is by way of argument. So againe, I finde in my selfe the fruits and effects of sanctification, and I am sure none are sanctified, but they are also justified, and they have received the Spirit of Christ, therefore I know I am one that belongs to him, all this is but the witnesse of our owne spirits, for these are but collections, that our owne spirits gather as a conclusion from the premisses; but now the witnesse of the Spirit, the witnesse of the holy Ghost, it is a distinct thing from this, therefore *Rom. 8. 16.* it is said, *so witnesseth together with our spirits*, and therefore is a distinct witnesse from our spirits, that indeede witnesseth the same things, but the witnesse is distinct from that of our owne spirit, and that is without any argument or reason at all, being a secret manifestation made to the soule, whereby wee are comforted and assured, that our sinnes are forgiven, and that Christ is willing to match with us. Now consider if thou wouldest know whether thou bee one that is matched with Iesus Christ, whether thou have this double witnesse or no, of the Word and of the Spirit.

You will say, hath every one this secret testimony?

I answer, that every one hath it in some degree, more or lesse, for that same in *Rom. 8. 16. The Spirit witnesseth with our spirits*, is a generall proposition, it concernes all beleivers, even with every mans spirit, the Holy Ghost beates witnesse, but then wee must take the words in the right sense; It is true, in some the Spirit speakes more evidently and audibly,

*Rom. 8. 16.*

*Quest.*

*Ans.*

Everyone hath it in some degree  
*Rom. 8. 16.*

Acts 23. 11

Acts 18. 9.

s By our  
owne con-  
sent.

bly, with joy unspeakeable and glorious, the flashes of comfort are much more bright and glorious to some then to others, and such speciall witnesses of the HOLY GHOST are very rare, and dispensed to us for some speciall purposes, commonly after some great humiliation or prayer, or to prepare us for some great enterprize, or some speciall conflict, they are even as the apparitions to *Abraham*, and *Iacob*, and *Paul*, were, *Acts* 23. 11. *Be of good courage Paul, thou must beare witness of mee at Rome, &c.* so when he was at Corinth, *Paul* bee of good comfort; I am with thee. *Acts* 18. 9. All these were on speciall occasions: so I say there are some speciall witnesses of the HOLY GHOST, when the HOLY GHOST speaks evidently, and these are dispensed to us according to the good pleasure of God, and commonly it is added for some speciall purpose: now I say, not that every one hath this kinde of testimony, but every one hath so much witness from the HOLY GHOST as doth uphold his spirit, that Christ is willing to match with him, that hee hath or may have interest in him, and in all the priviledges of his death; this I say, every one hath more or lesse, although those speciall degrees of the evident speaking of the *Holy Ghost*, are dispensed but to some, and to those that have it, but for a speciall time: this is the first thing.

The second thing thou art to enquire into (if thou wouldest know if there bee any such match, betweene Christ Iesus and thee,) what thy owne consent hath beene and is, which herein is not in words

words onely, but is given then, when thy heart and affections doe, or can make this answer, that thou art willing to match with the Lord Iesus, and this I give as a signe to examine thy heart by ; for it is not in the power of any man living to bring his heart to this consent, nor is any creature able to doe it, you may as well bring fire and water to agree together, as to bring the heart of a naturall man to be willing to match with the Lord, but it is a speciall worke of the holy Ghost that must mould the spitt a new, and breake all in pieces, and cast thee into a new frame, that must make thee willing to come into so neare a Communion with the Lord Iesus, for our spirits are quite contrary to it.

Onely concerning this, take this caution, that it is not so much what thou art willing to lay in any case or condition, for it may bee a man may bee willing sometimes to match out of feare, or hope, or out of some by respect, I say, he may be willing to doe any thing ; and to bee married to Iesus Christ, but it is another thing when a man can say, that it is the inward bent of his will, to have it done, it is the bent of his inward affection, the streame of them runnes that way ; this must bee wrought by the Holy Ghost. And take heed thou bee not deceived in it, for there are many unsound and false conceits, some there are that are willing to match with Iesus Christ, when they are in extremity, when they are on their death-bed, when they know not how to shift for themselves, but alas, such a consent is farre off from

*Caution.*

Our consent must not be.

Onely in extremity.



<sup>2</sup> Not for a  
fit.

<sup>3</sup> In good  
mood.

<sup>4</sup> hereafter.

from being a right consent, there is no freedome in this consent, that contract that is made thorrow threatning, it is but a compelled and constrained consent, this is not that which thou canst ground on, and yet this is a frequent thing, when men are in straits, that they know not what to doe, then they are willing to match with Christ. Besides it may bee a man is willing to match with Iesus Christ for a time, to serve him for a fit, for a moneth or a yeere, but art thou willing to make an everlasting covenant with him? you know that such a covenant is required in Marriage, that women give up themselves to their husbands so long as they live together. Now ordinarily when a man considers this seriously, What, must I forsake my pleasure for ever? must I live to Iesus Christ, and no more to my selfe? must I bestow all my time upon him, and have no more liberty? here a man makes a stand, hee is not willing to make such a covenant with him, such an everlasting Covenant; therefore consider whether thy consent be for perpetuity. Moreover, it may bee thou art willing to match with him in some good mood, when thou art in a good-fit, but that may bee but a flash. There are many that for a fit in some good mood, when their hearts are wrought on, by some powerfull preaching of the Word, or some transient action of the holy Ghost, they are willing to match with Iesus Christ, but this holds not.

Besides againe, many are willing to match with Christ hereafter, but they are not content to doe

it



it for the present, but you know it is essentiall to the Marriage Covenant, that it be *in verbis de presenti*, for the present, that is, I doe take this man for my wedded husband, &c. not that I promise I will, but that I am willing at this time, to give up my selfe to him, this present resigning of ones selfe; this is the consent that makes the Marriage. But that wee may shew all these false consents, I will runne thorow them briefly.

Errours in mens consent.

First, there is in some an errorr concerning the person, when men are ready to take Iesus Christ, and yet do not conceive aright of him. Whereas the Lord hath dealt plainely with us, as if he meant not to circumvent us, and tells every man aforehand, that if he will match with him, he must make account to take up his Crosse, and deny himselfe, he must make account to bee wholly to him. Now, when a man lookes on Christ, and conceives him under another notion, and thinks he shall live another kinde of life more free and loose, and thinkes this strictnesse is not required at his hands by Christ, now there is an errorr in the person, and that makes the Marriage frustrate; therefore take heede you bee not deceived in this, for thou must know this, that when thou art once married to the Lord, then thy will must bee subject to his will, thou must bee content to obey him in all things, thou must bee content to forgoe all, and refine up thy selfe to him, and live no longer to thy selfe, but to him.

1 In the person.

Yet, there is another errorr, that commonly runnes along with mens consent when it is not right,

2 VVhen we take not the Lord alone.

right, which is, when a man is not willing to take the Lord alone, but joynes others with him, when a man will so match with Iesus Christ, that hee seekes other things too, when hee will seeke honours with him, and seeke wealth, and seeke the pleasures of this world. Now, if thou match with Christ, know this, that thou must be content with him alone, thou must not joyne pleasures, and Christ together, thou must not joyne covetousnesse, and him together, thou must not seeke praise with men, and think to match with Iesus Christ, thou must bee content to bee divorced from all other things and be to him alone, and take heede, that this deceive thee not.

3 Imperfect  
consent.

And lastly consider, whether this consent that thou give, be a perfect consent; for there is a certaine imperfect consent that deceives many, when a man hath (as I may so speake) a kinde of wambling that way, but it doth not boyle up to that full height of resolution, when a man makes some kinde of offer, he makes well toward it, but he doth not fully resolve to match with the Lord Iesus, and this is that, that excludes many from this match, that, though they have a kinde of willingnesse and velleity, yet it doth not come to a fixed, solid, peremptory resolution. Now, you must know this, that whosoever matcheth with Iesus Christ, must be so fully resolved, that he must bee shooke off againe with nothing: this resolution when it is imperfect and by halves, when thou doubttest whether thou shouldest doe it or no, this is a consent that is not accepted, all  
this

this while there is an error on thy part, this is the second thing to be considered, as thou must consider whether thou beleevest the consent of Iesus Christ, so I say in the second place, if thou wouldest know whether there be a match betweene Iesus Christ and thee, consider what thy owne consent is, and take heed thou be not deceived in it.

Thirdly, to know whether there be a match betweene the Lord and thee, consider whether there be an union made betweene you and him : now, this union with Christ, it is not meereley a relative union, such as is betweene husbands and wives, but besides this, there is a reall union, when **C H R I S T** sends his Spirit into the heart ; therefore thou must consider, whether thou have the Spirit of thy Husband dwelling in thee or no, for except thou have the holy Ghost to dwell in thy heart, it is impossible that there should be any match, for there will be alwayes jarres and dissensions betweene you, when thou hast the same Spirit, then there is the same will, the same desires, you love and hate the same things ; therefore in considering, whether there be a match or no, this is a great thing, it will not deceive you, consider whether thou have the Spirit of thy husband. I finde that the Apostle in all his Epistles, hee takes this as the sure argument to perswade himselfe and others, that they were grafted into Christ, that they had received the earnest of the Spirit, I neede not name to you particular places, they are so exceeding frequent. If

3  
Way to  
know wee  
are match-  
ed to Christ  
by our uni-  
on.

By the  
Spirit.

Rom. 8.

*any man have not the Spirit of Christ, hee is not his.* Rom. 8. but if you have the Spirit, you are sure you have the Sonne. Consider therefore, whether you have this Spirit in you or no, whether thou walke according to the Spirit or the flesh, guided and led by the Spirit of Christ in all, for that is the way to know if thou have the Spirit. A man may walke after the vanity of his owne heart, A man may walke after the vanity of his owne mind, when yet he hath some good motions and good desires; so that if thou wouldest try thy selfe, whether thou hast the Holy Ghost, the spirit of thy Husband, thou shalt find it by thy constant course, as you have it, Gal. 5. *If you have the spirit, live in the Spirit*, that is, consider what thine ordinary course is, whether thou be guided by the Holy Ghost or no.

Gal. 5.

The worke  
of the Spirit  
in us.

To know whether this spirit dwell in us or no, wee must not take it upon conceit and fancy, but you shall finde it by reall and sure effects. If you have the Spirit, he will be as fire in you, *I will Baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire*, that is, the Holy Ghost shall be as fire; now the nature of fire is, to discover it selfe where it is. If the Spirit be in thee, hee will bee as the Pilot in the ship, hee will direct thy course, and build up the Kingdome of Christ in thy heart, that is the third thing, consider whether thou have the Spirit of the Sonne.

4  
VVay by  
sanctificati-  
on.

Fourthly, if thou wouldest know whether *Christ* have matched with thee, then be sure of this, that *he hath washed thee from thy filthinesse*, looke to that as another marke where by thou maist discern

it

it: For though I E S U S C H R I S T marry thee when thou art in thy blood, yet when thou art married once, he suffers thee not to continue so, but hee will cleanse and wash thee from it, as we see in this Chapter, the Apostle exhorts *Husbands to love their Wives, as Christ loved the Church, and gave himselfe for it, that hee might sanctifie, and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word, that he might present it to himselfe a glorious Church not having Spot or Wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy without blemish*; mark it, when Christ hath married thee, his end is, to present thee pure, to wash thee. Now consider whether thou find thy selfe cleansed from thy filthinesse, and from all filthinesse, for when hee washeth any, hee washeth them from top to toe, though not fully in respect of degrees, yet he suffers not any spot or wrinkle, to remaine constantly upon them. For the meaning is, not that this washing is perfected suddenly, when wee come to heaven, there shall not be the least wrinkle at all: but notwithstanding he so washeth them here, that there is no spot remains, that is, they allow not themselves in any sinne, that they wallow not in any puddle, hee so cleanseth them from every sinne, that it doth not abide there, a beleever is still purifying himselfe, though he be still defiled; therefore consider with thy selfe, whether Christ have thus cleansed thee from *all pollution of flesh and spirit*. Beside in this washing, hee doth not onely cleanse thee from all outward defilements, but he will wash thee from thy filthy nature, not onely from the outward

How far the  
Saints are  
washed.

staynes, but from that swynish nature : for though a swine be washed cleane, if she retuaine her nature, shee will be ready to fall into the next puddle shee meetes with ; but now when Christ washeth his Church, hee washeth them from the filthinesse of their nature, even every man whom hee washeth : Therefore consider if thou finde this purifying of the Holy Ghost or no ; for whosoever is washed by Christ, there is a certaine simplicity and plainnesse of heart, that though he fall into sinne, yet his heart is upright with Christ, as wee see in 2.

2 Cor. 11. 3.  
4.

*Cor. 11. 3. 4. I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy, for I have prepared you for one husband, to present you a pure Virgin to Christ, I feare least as the Serpent beguiled Eve, so your minds should bee corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. Marke, the Apostle speakes of the Church, as it is in this life, my endeavour is to present you as a Virgin, what is that? that you bee not corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ, but that you may have a plaine heart, that hath no deceit, that there be nor a double minde. Christ so farre cleanseth, that the heart is upright in every thing, therefore by that thou shalt know whether thou be washed or no, for though Iesus Christ marry us when we are Ethiopians, yet when he hath married us, he puts a beauty upon us. Consider whether this beauty be put on thee or no, whether thou bee so washed from thy filthinesse, that there doth a new beauty appeare, that that naturall blacknesse of thine bee removed throughout : indeed it is removed but in part for degrees, but yet there is a generall, throughout removing of it all over. Lastly,*

## The Churches Marriage.

21

Lastly, if thou wouldest know whether thou be matched or no with him, consider whether thou have *the wedding garment*. In *Mat. 22.* and *Luke 14.* you shall finde the parable of the King inviting men to the marriage of his sonne, and there are many that come, but one of them wanted a *wedding garment*: What is the meaning of that? many men come to the wedding for cheare, many for the benefit they might receive, or such by respects, because they would doe as others doe, because they might escape censure; many motives there might be to bring men to this marriage feast: but now to have the wedding garment, that is the tryall.

Now what is the wedding garment?

It is a wedding affection, it is to love the Bridegroom himselfe, his person, for we are not onely guests, wee are not so to understand it, but such guests as withall are married to the Son. Now he that comes to this wedding without a conjugall wedding affection, he comes without the wedding garment; therefore consider with thy selfe whether thou have that affection or no.

You will say, what is this marriage affection?

I answer, it is such an affection whereby a man pitches on Christ, hee chuseth him *before all others*, as his Husband: the wedding affection, is such an affection, as when one prefers her husband before all others: Consider whether there be such an affection, that thou canst preferre Iesus Christ, before all things in the world besides.

Again consider, whether thy affection bee fix-

§ The wedding garment.  
Matth. 22.

Wedding garment what?

*Quest.*

*Ans. I.*  
Marriage affection what?  
1 To preferre Christ.

2 To looke to his person.



ed on his person : for the affection of an harlot may be towards her husbands goods, and toward the commodities and benefits by him ; but art thou able to love the person of Iesus Christ, so as to delight in him, and desire his presence, and seekest him, so that thou carest not for any thing so thou maist have him ? this is to have a wedding conjugall affection : but this is not all that makes the marriage garment.

3  
Boldnesse.

Consider besides what boldnesse thou hast in his presence, for *perfect love casts out feare* : now by perfect love, is not meant onely love in the perfection, that is growne to a height, (such wee shall not have, till wee come to heaven) but by perfect love is to bee understood sincere love : therefore if thou wouldest know if thou have the wedding garment, whether this conjugall affection be wrought, thou shalt know it by the boldnes thou hast with thy husband : wilt thou say, thou art married to him, and yet darest not speake to him, but lookest on him, as on a Iudge, as a hard Master, or a stranger ? that thou darest not aske any thing of, or if thou dost, thou knowest not whether thou shalt obtaine it ? there is a certaine boldnesse and familiarity goes along with this, is there such a disposition put into thy heart ?

4  
Spirituall  
graces.

Besides this is not all, there doe withall accompany this all spirituall graces, that cloatheth thy soule, that doe alter the habit of it, for there is something understood in the similitude of a garment, as importing the very cloathing that the soule wears, when it hath another habit than it had



had before. Now this cloathing is a party-coloured garment made of all the graces of the Spirit; therefore if thou wouldest know whether thou have this wedding garment or no, thou must looke to every grace, for the Image of God is nothing else, but the bundle and heape of all graces: as the olde man, the image of Saran, and the first Adam is the heap of all corruptions; so this wedding garment, this Image of the new Adam, it is that which consists of all the graces, thesomust cloath thy soule.

And now beloved, when this is done, the second thing that we are to doe after this examination, is,

To perswade every man to bee content to take Iesus Christ for his Husband. If already you be in Christ, wee have no more to doe, but to exhort you, but to continue and intend that desire, and affection, and love to your Husband; but if upon this examination you finde you are yet strangers, I say the next use we are to make of it, is to bring your hearts to a willingnesse to match with him. Now to perswade you to this, I will pitch briefly on these three particulars.

First, consider whether thou bee able to live without a husband or alone? The truth is, thou must marry of necessity, or thou art undone; for it is the case of every man which is said of the Captive woman in *Deut. 21.* when they had overcome a City, if there were a woman among them to whom they had a favour, they might marry her if they would, if shee consented, shee saved her

*Vse 2.*

To perswade men to take Christ.

Motives.

I  
Our necessity of him.

*Deut. 21.*

life by it. I say, that is the case of every man living, that when wee were all exposed to death, Iesus Christ had a favour to us, and we must marry him or we dye for it. Now therefore when he shall be a suitor to thee, consider what thou hast to say, art thou able to live without him? art thou able to pay thy ranfome? certainly thou art not able, and is it not then a madnesse in thee to refuse?

Our debt.

Consider what is thy debt, and consider thou art bound to pay the utmost farthing which the Lord requires at thy hands: when a man considers seriously of this, that every idle word, every sinne of omission, or that is committed, is a debt, and stands upon his owne score, and that himselfe is not able to pay, this will make a man begin to looke about him. My beloved, all the afflictions, that wee have in this life, they are but a paying the use money required for the debt, the maine debt remains intire, that must bee payd at that day, *the day of wrath, at the day of declaration of the just Iudgement of God*; therefore consider first thy debt, and withall consider thy poverty.

Simile.

a Poverty.

'Tis true, though thou wert in debt, if thou hadst somewhat to pay it, it were another matter. And indeed, many men are puffed up with a conceit, and thinke they have something to pay, and this is the case of all hypocrites, that thinke they have some good workes, they have done many good things, they come to Church duely, &c. But you must know that all this will not pay your debt, as it is *Revel. 3. I counsell thee to buy of me gold, that thou maiest be rich.*

Revel. 3.

Till

Till a man hath a husband, till he have *Iesus Christ*, all the workes he doth are little worth.

I, but though a man bee in debt, and have not a penny to pay his debt, yet there is usually a time given, a man is not cast presently into prison.

I answer, though thou bee not, yet thou art in danger all the time; and it is a miserable thing to live in another mans danger, to bee in danger of an enemy, when a man shall have many writs out against him, and knowes not when the Sergeant will seize upon him; I say, put the case hee be not arrested, yet he is in continuall feare; this is thy case before thou bee under this covert, before thou be matched to this thy husband Christ: when thou hast him, thou art safe, but in the meane time thou art in continuall feare. As *Heb. 2. 14.* it is given as a reason, *Why Christ tooke part with the children, that he might deliver them, that for feare of death, were all their life long subject to bondage*; So that though a man bee not cast into prison, hee is all his life time subject to bondage. Now if it were but to be delivered from this feare, and bondage that every other man is in, it were a great motive to move us to this. I, but is there not some bayle, may not a man flee from this arrest?

I answer no, every man without Christ is like a woman that is friendlesse, that hath none to stand for her, that is destitute of wisdom, that hath no counsell to direct her. Wee are destitute of righteousnesse, we have none to speake for us,

we

*Object.*

*Answ.*

Though a man in debt be not imprisoned, hee is in feare.

*Heb. 2. 14.*

*Quest.*

*Answ.*

No baille or escape from this danger.

1 Cor. 1. 30.

we are destitute of sanctification, wee have none to cleanse us, from our leprosie; wee are destitute of redemption; therefore you know it is said, *Jesus Christ is made Wisdome, Righteousnesse, Sanctification, and Redemption*: which implies thus much, that till wee bee married to him, wee have neither wisdom, wee have no righteousness to speake for us, wee have none to cleanse us, wee have none to redeeme us; this is the first thing to move thee to it.

2  
Motive.  
The excellency of  
Christ.

• Himselfe  
and his at-  
tributes.

Secondly, when thou hast well pondered this first motive, that thou art not able to live alone without a husband, I say, consider secondly the excellency of thy husband, who it is that is a sutor to thee. And here first looke on Christ himselfe, with all his Attributes, and how that the Lord himselfe will become thine; consider the infinite wisdom of Christ, his Almighty power, consider his eternity; consider whatsoever is in him, and thinke with thy selfe, that all this is in *Him*, who offers himselfe to bee my husband, and all this shall be mine, all this is for my use, and advantage; this is a great motive to winne us to match with him, as you know in earthly marriages, the excellency of a husband, the parts that are in him, those that are inherent in his very person, is the greatest motive of all other: thinke therefore of all Christs excellencies, draw to your selves some *Idea* of him, and thinke all these are mine, for my use, as his wisdom to give me direction, his power and strength for my protection upon all occasions, whatsoever is in him

him is mine, hee himselfe is become my portion ; this is a great motive to us.

Besides this, consider that thou hast not onely the person of Christ alone, with all his Attributes, but how much comes with him, which adde to this ; as the immunity thou hast by marching with Christ, that when thou art once matched with him, thou art under covert, thy debts are paid, thou art out of all danger. My beloved, if it were but to bee freed from those injuries, and wrongs that a woman is subject unto, from potent enemies that are able to hurt her upon all occasions, you know it is a great motive to move her to match. Now Iesus Christ frees us from all those great enemies of our salvation, as it is *Luke 1. 74.* *That bring delivered from the hands of all our enemies, wee might serve him in holynesse and righteousness all the days of our lives.* This wee have by him, that when Satan shall come to us, and arrest us, wee may say to him, I am now under covert, thou must goe to my husband, hee is bound to pay my debts. My beloved, we consider not what a benefit this is, what it is to have Iesus Christ at such a time, when you come to dye, when you shall be arrested by death ; now to have the Lord Iesus to undertake all your debts, now to bee under covert it is a great matter ; as you know (to expresse it to you a little what it is,) *Indas* when hee had committed that great sinne, he was indited and arrested, hee had none to flee to ; *Peter* when he had committed a sinne, hee had a covert to goe to, and you all know the difference

2 What we have by him.

4 Our immunity.

Luke 1. 74.

ference that was betweene their conditions in the events upon both ; *Saul* and *David* if you looke on them in their distresse, *David* had a covert to goe to when he was in distresse, (for I speake not now of the debt of sinne, but of all calamities in which you shall have a husband to bee a refuge for you,) I say, *David* when hee was in distresse upon any occasion, when his Citty was burned and his Wives taken, hee had a covert to fly to ; but when *Saul* was in distresse, hee had none, hee went to the Lord, but he had no answer. I say, it is a great matter to consider this, that we have a covert, that when the Lord shall raine downe fire and brimstone upon us, when there is no rock to shelter us, now for Iesus Christ to bee a covert to us. We know the Egyptians when they were in that deadly storme of haile, the Israelites were in their houses under covert, and look't out, and saw the danger they were in, and they then knew the benefit what it was to bee under shelter : such is the condition of all those that are in Christ.

a Privi-  
ledges and  
riches.

a In pro-  
mise.

Besides this immunity, consider all those great priviledges that doe come by him, for this is not all ; but when you have matched with him, hee will make you rich, hee will make you heires of all things, all the precious promises belong to you, which it may be you reckon a small matter ; but the promises of God are most precious, and will make one rich, as you know a man that hath nothing but bills and bonds, and evidences, may bee very rich, though he have not a penny by him ; so to have all the promises belong to us : now as

soone

soone as we were in Christ, there is not a promise in all the booke of God, but it belongs to us; that is the misery of another man that is not in Christ, there is not one promise his. Therefore till thou have him, thou hast nothing.

And besides the hope of the promises, consider what you have for the present, what dowry hee brings with him, in 1 Cor. 3. *Wherefore let no man rejoyce in men; for all things are yours, whether it be Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, &c.* all is yours, and you are Christs. Marke, here is the expression of that dowry, that Christ brings with him an Inventory of the wealth of a Christian, saith he, when once you are married to Christ, all that is his belongs to you; *Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas*, all his servants, all are bestowed on you, to wait upon the Spouse, as it were; hee hath given all to you, all those gifts are bestowed on them for your sakes: besides, *the world is yours*, that is, as farre as it is good for you, the world and all things in the world are so a Christians; though hee have but little of it, yet indeed the world is his; other men are the worlds: if wee speake properly, the world is not said to bee any mans, but onely a Christians; for his use, he is the master of it. Indeed, whilst a man is in his minority, (you know the heire doth not possesse his goods, because it is the time of his education, so) it may bee thou hast not full possession: It is dispensed to thee as the Lord sees meete, because it is the time of thy nurrure and education, thou art in thy minority, but yet *the world is thine*. Then he goes on, *life or death,*

2 In possession.

1 Cor. 3. ult.



death, that is, all this life is bestowed on a Christian for his advantage : to another man it is not so ; the longer hee lives, it is the worse for him, hee hath the further reckoning ; it doth but make his sinne ripe, and but lay up a treasure of wrath for him ; so that all a mans life long, hee doth but gather stickes to make a fire to consume him at the last day. But now in the portion of a Christian, this is one thing, that Iesus Christ bestows upon him, that all his life is for his advantage ; all the good workes he doth, all those shall bee remembered, all those shall goe along with him, and bring a sure reward ; and then not onely life is his, but death is also. My beloved, it is a strange thing, that this should be reckoned among the dowries, and commodities, and priviledges that Christ bestowes on his Spouse, to bring death with him ; yet this is a great priviledge, that hee bestowes death on us ; for what were the condition of a Christian if death were not ? were it not the most miserable of all other ? for if there were no death, there should be no Resurrection : therefore death must needs bee a very great advantage : it is that, that makes way for us, to deliver us out of all the miseries of this life, and to give us possession of that everlasting Kingdome that is provided for us. *Whether they bee things present, or things to come*, that is, all that belong to this present life, and not onely those, but those that belong to the life to come, all those are yours : this is that we have by Christ.

3  
The life we  
shall leade  
with him.

And lastly consider, how faire a life you shall live



live with him, in what plenty; that there is nothing that your heart can desire, but you shall have it; In that security, that you neede feare no enemy; whereas other men have a thousand feares, a Christian hath this benefir, hee makes the Lord his dread, that hee need feare nothing; but he is delivered from the hands of all his enemies. Consider with what contentment thou shalt live, that thou hast such a husband that is an adequate object (that I may so say) that shall fill thy soule, that when thou hast him, thou needest not thirst after any thing besides. That is the great benefir that is promised, that thou shalt *Thirst no more*, that is, when a man is married to the Lord Iesus, hee is so filled and satisfied with contentment, that hee lets all other things goe: if hee have them so it is; if he want them, it is no great matter: hee hath one that is contentment enough to him, hee hath one that is instead of all.

But you will say, if I have this husband, I must live in subjection to him; our wills must bee subject to his will; our liberty must bee taken from us.

My beloved, what if it bee? you must consider what kinde of subjection it is, it is such a subjection as whereby the members are subject to the head: now doe you thinke it any burthen, for the members to bee subject, and to bee ruled by the head? it is a naturall subjection, that is, such a subjection as is convenient for you; therefore if you complaine, you have lost your liberty, know it is quite contrary when you have matched with

*Object.*

*Ans.*  
VVhat kind  
of subjection  
we are  
in to Christ.

with Christ, now you are delivered from bondage and set at liberty.

*Object.*

I, but you will say, it is a pleasant thing for a man to doe what he will; liberty is a sweet thing, and to part with this, and now to live under a husband, it is a hard case.

*Ans.*

Liberty in  
evill hurt-  
full.

For this my beloved I beseech you consider, that it is true, for a man to live as hee will, if his will bee right, it is a great benefit; but for a Franticke man to doe what hee will, for a man whose will is set upon things hurtfull to himselfe, for such a man to have his will, it were better hee were restrained: and this is the case of every man till hee bee matched with the Lord Iesus: therefore that you may know what this liberty is, wee will put you but this case; you must know that every man is married to one of these two husbands, either hee is subject to the law of righteousness, or to the law of sinne; either hee is in bondage to the flesh or to the spirit, either hee is subject to Christ, or else he is subject to Sathan. Now consider which of these two thou wouldst choose, whether to bee subject to the law of sin, or to Christ: and that you may know which to choose, I will expresse it to you by this; It is as when a sicke man lyes betweene the Physician and the disease, hee must needs bee subject to one of them: the disease counsells him to doe one thing, the Physician another: now consider which of these two thou wouldst obey.

*Simile.*

You will say, I would doe what I list, I would doe as my disease suggests to mee, and would have

have me doe: that seemes easie for the present, but will not this increase thy bondage, and pay thee with death in the end? on the other side, if thou bee content to be subject to the Physician, and have thy will subject to his, doth not this draw to liberty and restore health, and bring thee to life? therefore consider what a small objection that is, and consider what, what you will choose; for I say, every man must be subject to one husband; and that you may see the difference of these husbands, consider that in *Romans*, 7. you shall finde there, that whosoever is not married to Christ, is subject to another husband, that is, the Law. Know you not brethren, that the Law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? for the woman that is subject to a man is bound by the Law to the man while he liveth, and if she take another man, she shall be called an adulteresse: but if the man be dead, she is freed from the Law, so that shee is not an adulteresse, though she take another man. This is but the similitude: but the meaning is, before ever a man bee married to Christ, he is married to the Law, and he cannot be married to Christ Iesus, till hee be dead to the Law; and when he is dead once to that, then he may be married to him. Now you shall see the reddition of this similitude: To you brethren are dead to the Law by the body of Christ, that you might be married to another, to him that was raised from the dead, that you might bring forth fruit unto God. For when you were in the flesh, the motions of Sinne that are by the Law had force in your members to bring forth fruit unto death, &c. The meaning is

Rom. 7.

this, that till a man be matched to Iesus Christ, the Law of God, the morall Law that is written in every mans conscience, it rules there like an hard husband, a severe cruell husband, that sets an hard taske to doe, and gives no strength at all to doe it, and therefore it brings forth death: for when the Law commands a man to doe a thing, he hath no ability to performe it: and withall it doth signifie unto him, that if he doe not performe it, he shall bee cursed; this is to bee subject to the Law: and so a man lives in bondage all his time; so that whosoever is not married to Christ, he is all the while subject to an evill conscience, to the Law that suggests what hee should doe, with threatning him if not; and when conscience tells him, that he hath not performed it, it is a continuall vexation, a burthen and a griefe to him: but now when he is married to Christ, then he serves in *newnesse of spirit*, not in the *oldnesse of the letter*, as it followes there, that is, hee doth every thing freely, hee doth it out of choice, he doth that which his owne spirit earies him to; looke what commandement he hath, he hath some ability to performe it.

Againe, hee serves a kind husband, that takes every thing in good part, that will not pay him with death, as his first husband doth. I say consider this, and let it be the second motive.

The third thing I will conclude with, is, the danger of refusing him, wherein I thought to have bin large, but I can but touch it. I say consider this, that if thou refuse, it is the greatest sin that thou canst

canst commit : for thou must know this, that when the Lord Iesus Christ shall become a suter to thee, for thee then to refuse, thou provokest him to anger. I dare say, it goes beyond all the sins thou hast committed ; for know this, hee is not a bare suter, but a suter that hath paid deare for his wife ; hee hath purchased thee at a deare price, with the shedding of his owne blood : so that if thou wilt not heare his sute, hee looseth not only his labour in suing, but the price that he paid for thee, for the very blood of Iesus Christ shall bee put upon thy score. To have the Lord as suing to thee thus despised, you know, *Rom. 2. 4. 6. Despising the patience of God, treasures up wrath against the day of wrath.* Now despising kindnesse is greater, and the contempt of it, doth more incense the Lord to anger. Now therefore when the Lord shall be a suter to us, one would thinke we should rather be suters to him : but when he shall condescend to be a suter to us, and be refused, think what a provocation it is ; I will give you but one instance, that you may know what it is to refuse this sute. The Iewes when Christ came in the flesh, it is said, *He came to his owne*, he made offer of himselfe, *but his owne received him not, but refused him*, they would none of him. *John. 1. He came to his owne, but his owne received him not*, you see how Christ tooke this at their hand, you see, *For this the wrath of God is come upon them to the utmost.* Compare now all the sins of the Iewes, and all the punishments that were upon them before this time, they were nothing to this.

Refusing  
Christ, the  
greatest sin.

Rom. 2. 4. 6.

Ioh. 1.

The greatest  
sin of the  
Iewes, and  
had the  
greatest pu-  
nishment.

I  
The wrath  
of God hath  
beaten  
them longest  
for it.

2  
Their Nati-  
on is disper-  
sed.

3. p. 2. 1775

For first you see, that for sixteen hundred yeares welnigh, the wrath of God hath laynd on them; take the times of the Lords wrath formerly upon that nation; it may be for seventy yeares, or for forty yeares, as in the time of the Iudges, and in the captivity of Babylon, what was that to this wrath?

Secondly, in those times, though they were in captivity; and were hardly used; yet the nation was still kept together; and restored againe; now they are scattered to all nations of the earth, so that this very sinne of the Iewes in refusing Iesus Christ, you see how the Lord was offended with it, as the Apostle expresth it, *the wrath of God is come upon them to the utmost*: marke it, for it is your owne case, that when we preach the Gospell, and offer Christ, we are the friends of the Bridegroom: our businesse is, to present you as a pure Virgin to Christ, and when you will not heare, but refuse when we beseech you to be reconciled, you commit the same sin that the Iewes did; when they would not receive Christ: this is the case of every man that refuseth, you know those that were bid to the wedding; the text saith, *The King was exceeding angry*, and pronounced this, that not one that was bid should taste of the Supper: thus for a man to refuse, we know not what God will doe to that man: we cannot distinguish of the time: secret times belong to him: but for a man to refuse at any time; when hee is invited to come to Christ Iesus, either by the preaching of the Word, or by the secret motions of the Spirit, it is a dan-

gerous

gerous thing. Who knowes whether ever thou shalt bee invited more: as you see when they refused, the Lord did not send the second time, but pronounced this peremptory conclusion, and sentence upon them, *Not a man that was invited should come.*

An objection may bee made, which I will answer, and so proceede: which is concerning these motives I have given, & that is, whether we may use such to our hearts, to move us to take Christ, as to consider the priviledges and liberty we shall have with him; for wil some say, we are bound to match with Christ meerely out of love to his person: how shall these bee used as motives then?

These motives serve notwithstanding to two ends.

First they are a good introduction to lead us to the match: for when we make a tender of Christ, men will not hearken to us; as many a woman will not heare of such a suter; but when shee is told, that he hath such an estate, that he will bring her to such an house, thus and thus furnished, that she shall have these and these commodities by him, it may be that will winne her thus farre as now to see him, shee is content now that he should come, and be a suter, she is content to conferre with him; so I say, this is that that brings every man first to looke after Christ Iesus, to admit him as it were, to be content to see his person, to give him leave to conferre with them; therefore that is one use to be made of them.

The second use of such motives is, when a man

*Object.*

The consideration of the benefit by Christ, serve.

*Ans.*

1  
To lead us to match with him.

2  
To make us more willing.



hath resolved on the match, it is a great helpe to make him the more willing. When a man or a woman hath resolved on this match, and withall considered these and these additions, I say they add, they helpe well to his resolution: so that when respect to his person, hath once set the compasse, these considerations of punishment and reward, they are good to fill the sayles, and to cary the ship along, and to drive it to the Haven; although still the principall motive be a meere respect unto his person. I say that use these have, to bringe us to looke to Christ. But when once they have brought us to the knowledge of Christ, to be acquainted inwardly with him, now the heart of every man is to be content with him alone, though there be nothing beside, and indeed it is that which makes the match, onely these helpes are good additions; these draw us on to make our consent and choyce, and willingnesse the more full, and perfect: but this but by the way, onely to answer that objection.

Now to come to the maine impediments that hinder men from Christ, it is worth all our considerations, to see what it is, that keepes men off, which is not onely profitable to bring them in, that are yet strangers, but also to comfort those that are already entered into covenant with the Lord Iesus, and you shall finde one of these three things keepe men off.

Some there are that never heard of the Lord Iesus, some there are that heare of such an offer, but cannot beleeve it, some againe that doe beleeve it,

yet

3 impediments that hinder from Christ.

3 Sorts of men.

yet are not willing to live under him, but would live according to their liberty, they are not willing to change their condition, even as sometimes there is a Proclamation out for pardoning of Pirates, it may be there are many Pirates that never heard of this Proclamation, these cannot come in, they know it not, and this is the case of those to whom the Lord Iesus is not preached or remaine ignorant of him.

Secondly, there are some other Pirates, that heare of it, but they beleeve it not, they thinke it is but a trap to get them in, they cannot beleeve that those great rebellions that they have committed can be forgiven. There is a third sort that beleeve it, that make no question but they shall be pardoned if they come, but they thinke it a better course to live by piracy still, rather than to come in under the law to live in subjection, they thinke they shall live a poorer life and be more restrained, they are not willing to change their condition. Now for the first of these, wee have nothing to doe with them, for we speake to none but those that have heard of the Proclamation, that know wel enough there is such an offer made, therefore our businesse is with the two second.

First I will begin with those that will not beleeve, that there is such a pardon, that cannot thinke that the Lord Iesus is willing to match with them, this is a common case, many a man when he lookes on his rebellions, is ready to say, why is it possible that I may bee admitted to match with the Lord Iesus? I that have an heart so

2.

3.

I

2

Those that will not beleeve pardon.

hard, such lusts? I that have committed such rebellions against him. Yes, whosoever thou art, I am bold to say to thee, (and thou must thinke it as true, as if Christ himself should speak from heaven) that if thou dost come in, thou shalt be received.

*Quest.*

*Ans.*  
Christ wil-  
ling to re-  
ceive great  
sinners.  
*Dew. 21.*

Oh! but is it possible that such a wretch as I am may be advanced & raised to such a degree of honor

Yes, it is most possible, the Lord Iesus may have a favour to thee, it is our message to come and tell thee so much, onely thou must doe as the captive woman in *Dew. 21.* when any had a favour to a woman that was taken captive, she must put off her old clothes, she must put on new apparell, shee must be washed and purified, and pare her nailes, and so she must become his wife; so I say to thee, the Lord is willing to match with thee, onely thou must change thy rayment, thou must wash thee and pare thy nailes, &c. Therefore beloved, let none in this case be discouraged, as indeed we are exceeding apt to bee, and ready to doe in this case, as *Gideon*, when the Angell appeared to him, and told him he should doe great matters, that hee should judge Israel, that he should deliver them out of the hands of the *Midianites*, what saith *Gideon*? Lord (saith he) *What am I and my father? hee is one of the poorest in Manasses Tribe*, and I am the least in my fathers family, and is it possible that I should be raised to such honour? yes saith the Lord, it shall bee done, I will confirme it, thou hast my word, and I will confirme it by miracle, as you know he did by the burning of the Sacrifice, and by the dew on

on the Fleece, when all the earth was drie. I say, the same is our case, when we heare such a thing as this, that we shall be made Queenes, that wee shall match with Christ, when a man is little in his owne eyes, he wonders at it; I say, the Lord will make it good to thee, thou shalt have a word and a miracle to confirme it, for indeed beloved, it is a thing that needs a miracle, that the Sonne of God, the Lord Iesus, should come, and match with such wretches as we are.

You will say, where is this word?

You shall find it in *Rom. 4. 5. He justifieth the ungodly*, I will take but that place onely, *Abraham beleevved in him that justifieth the ungodly; and his faith was accounted to him for righteousness*, that is, though thou be an ungodly man, though thou be a Pirate, a Rebelt, it is no matter, the Lord will match with thee notwithstanding, and pay all thy debts and justifie thee; indeed after that, he will sanctifie thee, and change thy heart; but yet this is thy comfort, that though at present thou be ungodly, yet notwithstanding he will match with thee. Beloved, this is a sure word, and this is our great consolation, that though we be in our blood, yet then the Lord makes the match: indeed afterwards hee washeth and cleanseth us: therefore say not, I am blacke, and therefore the Lord can have no delight in me, and what can he see in me, to marry with me? for hee will marry with thee even then. Onely when he hath marryed thee, then he will change thy nature, he will change the skin of the Blacke-more, then he will put

I  
He hath gi-  
ven his word  
for it.  
*Rom. 4. 5.*

put a new beauty on thee, this is thy comfort, that there is this difference, betweene the marriage of Christ, and the marriage among men; when wee come to match, wee must find beauty, first some amiable thing in the party; but the Lord looks on us, when we are the most lothsome creatures in the world, and then hee makes the match, and after hee puts that beauty on us, that may cause him to delight in us.

2  
Confirmed  
it by mira-  
cle.

Mat. 4. 23.

You will say, here is the Word, but where is the miracle to confirme this?

I answer, this very word hath a miracle going along with it, and you shal see them put together in *Matth. 4. 23.* where you shall see the Lord Iesus when He came to His owne, to make a tender of Himselfe, in what manner Hee comes, sayth the Text; *Hee went about preaching the Gospell of the Kingdome*; that is, to tell men this good newes, that if they would match with Him, they should have a Kingdome. Here is the Word, and see the Miracle followes; Hee went about preaching the *Gospell of the Kingdome, and healing sicknesses, and diseases*; there is the miracle, that seeing it would bee a wondrous thing that the Lord should match with dust and ashes, that Hee should bestowe Himselfe thus freely on us, saith the Lord, if you will not beleeeve mee for the words sake, yet for the Miracles sake, you see what I doe, I that preach this.

But you will say, these Miracles were long agoe, if they were done now, it were another thing.

Beloved,

Beloved, it is all one, for know that this word and miracle went then together, the word is as ancient as the miracle, therefore you must make the same use of them now, as you would have done then; indeed if the word were now delivered, and the miracle wrought long agoe, it were another case, but when he that sayd the word, at the same time confirmed it with these miracles, this may worke beleefe.

You will say, this miracle confirms it in generall, if the Lord should speak personally to me, and say, I will be thy *Husband*, this were to purpose.

Beloved, consider, it is all one, because you have this generall, He bids *the Gospell be preached to every Creature*; therefore, thou art sure thou art in that number; consider that the word of promise also, which word you all know, that *Whosoever believes shall be saved*, that is, whosoever will take his pardon shall be saved, and nothing keepes men from salvation, but the refusing it; therefore say not, he that commits such and such sinnes, shall bee damned, but he that takes not the pardon shall be damned: Beloved, this is a matter of great consolation, this is that that is our Freehold, we have a sure word, and this is the Gospell that wee have to preach, that whatsoever the rebels bee, and whatsoever the sinnes are, yet they may come in, and be received.

I, but my sinnes are great, as red as skarlet?

What if they be? they shall be as snow.

But I have often committed them.

What if thou have? He that sayd to thee, thou shalt

not say  
that he  
that  
Pardon offered to all.

Obje<sup>ct</sup>.  
Answ.

No sinne  
excepted.

shalt

shalt forgive thy brother to seaventy times seaven times, sure He is able to forgive to seaventy thousand times seaven times.

Ob.  
Answ.

But my sinnes are exceeding great as the mighty mountaines. They shal be drowned in the bottome of the Sea, that is as able to drowne mountaines, as the least hill.

Oh ! but they are exceeding many, I am guilty of all variety of sinnes, there is scarce any grosse sinne, but I have committed it.

There is as great variety and multitudes of mercie, to cover and swallow them.

You will say, This is possible if my heart were soft, able to repent; but I have a hard obdurate heart.

God can  
soften the  
heart.

If thy heart be hard, he can take away that stonie heart, and give thee a fleshy heart; this he hath promised: Why now what hast thou to doe? even to lay fast hold on this word, as they did on the hornes of the Altar, and even goe and say to the Lord, Lord I will hold me here. Lord, it is thy word, thou canst not deny it, Lord, if thou wilt kill mee; here I will dye, I will not let my hold goe: I say, if thou doe but take hold of this word, *That He justifieth the ungodly, and whosoever will belevee shall be saved*: if thou take this hold, I assure thee, my life for thine, it is impossible, but the Lord should in the end give thee this answer, *Be of good comfort, thy faith hath saved thee*. I deny not, but that the Lord may hold off for a while, for a time he may keepe off, and give thee hard words, and say as he did to the woman of

Canaan,



## The Churches Marriage.

47

Canaan, that hee is not sent to such a dog as thou art; but if thou persist as she did, and keepe close to this word of promise, then after thou shalt receive the same answer that shee did, *Thy faith hath saved thee, be of good comfort.*

But you will say, if it be thus, this seemeth to be a very easie thing. Is there no more to doe? I answer, yes: and thou must marke diligently, that thou runne not away with a false conceit now.

First, thou must take out this pardon. You know a pardon in Law though the Prince give it, if it be not taken and sued out, it will doe a man no good.

Again, this pardon hath certaine conditions, thou must remember the conditions; if thou wilt have the pardon, thou must observe the covenants and conditions.

Lastly, know that this pardon may be for a certaine time, after which the pardon may be out of date.

For the first of these, you will say, what is it to take out the pardon?

Beloved, it is this, when a man hath seene his sinnes and knowes his need, and his rebellion (for that is first required) as you know whosoever pleads a pardon, must know himselfe guilty, and then seeketh a pardon, prayeth earnestly day and night and giveth not over, beseecheth the Lord to forgive his sinnes, and also if he stay long (as sometimes he doth, as we see in that Parable of the man that was in bed with his children, and loth

He that comes in to Christ must

I  
Take out  
his pardon.

To take out  
the pardon  
what,

loth to rise) yet thou must continue knocking, and not give over till he give thee.

What is it, he will give me (you will say?)

That is, till he give thee a secret assurance, till hee send His Spirit from Heaven, to say to thy soule in thee, *I am thy salvation*, till hee give thee some secret comfort, when thou hast that once, then thou hast taken out thy pardon. But till there be some calming of thy conscience, some secret answere of the Spirit, though there bee a pardon contained in the Word, thou hast not taken it out; for thou takest it not out, till the Lord gives it out: and when thou once gettest this secret hint, thou hast thy pardon sued out. Now let Satan and thine enemies come, thou mayst be bold to plead thou hast thy pardon, and it shall never bee taken from thee; that is the first thing, *To take out thy pardon.*

The second is, there is a condition required after taking it: there is this condition in it, you must bee no longer rebels, you must come in, and be subjects, and serve and obey your King. I say, you must remember this, therefore thou must goe to the Lord, and say, I know well there is such a condition in the pardon, I am content to enter into covenant with thee; so that that which is past may bee cleared, I resolve for the time to come to serve thee, and feare thee, and obey thee; I say, if thou canst bring thy heart to this purpose and resolution, thou hast kept the condition.

*Quest.*

But you will say, How shall we doe to keepe it?

2  
He must be  
no longer  
a rebell.

it ? it is one thing to purpose, but to keepe it is hard.

I will be bold to say, take no care for that, if thy purpose be sincere ; I say this to any, let his purpose be sincere, and his resolution without deceit and pretences to serve the Lord, to cleave to Him as an Husband ; then, I say, the Lord hath undertaken to give thee a new heart still, and hee will enable thee to keepe it : bring thou a well bettomed new resolution, so as to say, I will give up my selfe in obedience ; and the L O R D hath promised, it is one part of the Covenant, wherein hee hath promised not onely to forgive, but in *Ezech. 36.* He will give a new heart, and a new spirit : bee thou but willing to take him, and thou shalt bee able to doe that which thou hast undertaken.

Well, the last thing is the time of the pardon, there may bee a time when the pardon is out of date.

You will say, what is that time ?

Know that there is a double time, one is the time that is revealed to us, that are the Ministers of the Gospell, that is, the time of this life, for wee can say nothing else to any man but this, *At what time soever, while thou livest, thou repentest, thou shalt be saved.*

But then you must know, there is another time besides this, a time that is not revealed to us, but knowne onely to the Lord Himselfe; which may be thy time, and is that distance of time, which is betweene the first and the last offer.

*Ans.*

If the purpose be sincere God will give ability.

*Ezech. 36.*

3

The time of the pardon.

*Quest.*

*Ans.*

1

The time of life.

2

The time of the offer.

It is indeed the very offer it selfe, the very opportunity that God gives to thee, the very time of the tender of Christ to thy soule. Now this is onely knowne of the Lord himselfe, what that distance of time is betweene the first offer and the last that ever he will make to thee, and after this time this pardon is out of date to thee, though not to another, it is too late for thee to come in.

*Quest.*

A time only knowne to the Lord.

*Ans.*

2 Cor 6. 2.

You will say, what ground is there for this, that there is such another time, that is onely knowne to the Lord?

My beloved, it is a point worth the considering, therefore you shall see a ground for it, 2 Cor. 6. 2. when the Apostle had exhorted them there, *Not to take the Grace of God in vaine*, saith he, *This is the accepted time, this is the day of salvation*, implying, that all time is not the accepted time, for then there needed no distinction; but when he saith, *This is the accepted time*, there is a secret intimation, that when salvation is offering for ought thou knowest, this is so the accepted time, as that when that is past, there is no more opportunity. So in *Hebr. 3. When it is called to day*, that is, when the offer is making, that is the time.

*Heb. 3.*

Instances of some that lost this time  
Gen. 4.

Caine.

Now to give you some instances of this, as well as we give you grounds from the Word, in *Gen. 4.* God saith to *Cain*, *If thou doe well, shalt thou not be accepted?* but now after that time *Cain* was accursed and a brand set on him, the Lord gives him over, hee was excluded from the presence of the Lord for ever; there was a secret

time

time after, which the Lord made the offer no more. That was the case of *Saul*, there was a time, I say, Gods time, with *Saul*, was the time betwene the first offer and the last, when he bid *Samuel* pray no more for him, and he told *Samuel* resolutely and peremptorily, I have rejected him, and now there was no more hope. And this was the case of the *Jewes*, when he bade *Jeremiah* not to pray for them, saith he, I have resolved to destroy them, the time now is past. And this was the case of *Ierusalem*, *if thou hadest knowne the things that belong to thy peace*, in that thy day! if you aske what that day was? I say you shall find the very period of it, *Acts 13. 40.* you shall see there, when the offer was made fully (that was the Lords great mercy to them, hee doth not give over a man, till hee have made the clearly and fully) in Ver. *It was necessary we should speake the word first to you; but since you put it from you, and judge your selves unworthy of eternall life, wee turne to the Gentiles;* you may see their refusing before. The *Jewes* they were full of envie; and spake against the things that He spake; after this time the Lord made no more offer: this I say, was there case, and it is resembled in the Parable of them that were invited and refused; the inviters were sent forth no more unto them. It was the case of *Capernaum*, and those Cities to whom the seaventy were sent; if they would not receive them, they were to *shake the dust of their feet against them.*

Beloved, I beseech you consider this, for it

Saul.

The Jewes

Acts 13. 40

Capernaum

To take  
heed of  
neglecting  
this time.

Heb. 3.

is a matter of very much moment to thinke with your selves, what know I whether this be the very time when the Lord makes the last offer, and that how ever, it will not last ever. So you see *S. Paul* to the *Hebr.* ends Chap. 3. when hee had said, there is a certaine day, he brings his prooffe, saith hee, did not the Lord doe so with your fathers in the Wildernesse? Now you shall see with those in the Wildernesse, the Lord tooke tenne refusals at their hands, *These tenne times you have rebelled against me*, and then he would endure no longer. So the Lord deales at other times: it may be hee will take but five refusals at another, it may be twenty at another, it may be but one or two at a third mans hand. I say, you must bee exceeding carefull and wary, for the end of this doctrine is to teach you to take heed of refusing Christ Iesus, of letting the opportunity slip, take heed of refusing the time of the offer of Christ, the accepted time, when the Lord offers Christ in the Word, and by his Spirit accompanying it, it is dangerous to refuse. To conclude this poynt, consider, when the Lord himselfe shall be a suter; beloved, wee should be suters to him, but hee is pleased to be a suter to us. And consider, that whereas other women use to bring portions to their husbands, hee is pleased to buy us, and to give us portions, and can you find in your heart to refuse?

Object.

You will say; if I were sure the Lord would take me.

Answer.

Beloved, you shall see how farre hee goes, that

that wee may put you out of all doubt.

First, he hath made a very cleare declaration of his good will: he saith, *Whoſoever will come, ſhall be ſaved*, he ſhall be taken in, whoſoever will come. This is not all, but he goes further then that, he hath not onely ſet up ſuch a *Quicunque vult*, but he ſends home to us, hee calls and invites us, *goe, call and invite them to the marriage*. This is not all, but he goes yet further, he beſeecheth us, hee becomes a downeright ſuter, 2 Cor. 5. *Wee are Embaſſadours in Chriſts ſtead, to beſeech you to be reconciled*. Nay beloved, more then this, hee is not a cold, but an importunate earneſt ſuter, *Goe, compell them to come in*, ſaith he, that is, with the ſtrongeſt arguments you can uſe: he doth not reſt here, here is as much as hee can doe by faire meanes: but then he tryes the other, to ſee what he can doe by foule meanes, then he layes a command upon men, 1 Iohn 1. 3. *This is the Commandement, that wee beleewe in his Sonne*; hee commands all men living to come in, and take Chriſt, and receive the pardon. And it is not a bare command, but hee adds a threatning; if they will not take him, they ſhall bee damned: which is the greateſt threatenings that can be. Conſider, wilt thou reſuſe now? I will ſay but this in a word, if thou wilt for all this, it ſhall be the greateſt matter againſt thee at the day of Iudgment: take all finnes, the groſſeſt Idolatry, and adultery, and whatſoever elſe: they ſhall not be ſo much laid to thy charge when thou commeſt to lye on thy death-bed, as this; that Chriſt was preached, that

That God is ready to receive ſinners.

1. He hath declared it.

2. He intreats it.

3 Cor. 5. 19.

3. Commands it.

1 Iob. 1. 3.  
4. Threatens if we come not in



Nothing re-  
quired but  
sincerity.

3  
Those that  
believe but  
will not  
come in.

there was so many offers made, and yet thou wouldest none of him. Therefore consider this, and say not nay; alas, such conditions are required on my part, as I cannot performe them; for beloved, there is nothing required on thy part but sincerity. Indeed that is required: thou must not thinke when thou art matched to thy husband, to live as if thou wert a maid still; thou must not thinke to match with thy husband, and to live as thou list, thou must not thinke to sweare still, and follow the lust of uncleanness still, and to follow thy drunkenness and good fellowship still, thou must not thinke to match with the Lord Iesus, and breake the Sabbath and neglect holy duties, and violate thy conscience, thou must know, that all thy old cloathing, as I said before, must be put off, and not onely so, but thy nailes must be pared, that is, those thoughts that thou reckonest lesse sinnes, vaine thoughts, idle thoughts, negligent performance of holy duties, or whatsoever is of that nature, these nailes must be pared; there must be a sincere heart, to resolve to doe all this. But so much for those second sort of men, that will not beleieve there is such a pardon, that yet cannot think the Lord Iesus is willing to match with them, and to passe by the great finnes that they have committed.

But now for the third sort, which is indeed of the greatest company of men; for wee finde not so many men doubt, whether they shall be forgiven or no; but though they know there is a pardon

perdon, and that the Lord will march with them, yet they are willing to live as they did, they are not willing to come under his subjection to live by his Lawes. Now besides consider, what is the cause of this, what keeps men off from this.

First, you shall find one great generall cause is *Inconsideration*: this is the fault of young men, that have a thousand vanities in their heads, and never thinke of marching with Christ, and of their spirituall estate: And not of them onely, but of other too, who as they are held off by pleasures, so others by businesse, as appeares in those invited to the marriage: one went about his merchandize, another to his Oxen, and never considered, they never took to heart this their inviting to the marriage: consider that in *Deut. 32. 27.* When *Moses* had made an exhortation, that they should not receive the strange Gods of the people, but come into covenant and be married to him (for that is the scope of the Chapter) threatening with all, that when they should provoke him to jealousy, he would provoke them; saith he, *Oh that you were wise to consider your latter end*, as if he should say, this is the cause that you come not in, and keep not close to the Lord, *Oh that you were wise to consider*, for it is a mans wisdom to consider this, for a wise man stands as one upon the top of an high hill or a rocke, and so he looks round about him, and sees all events before they come, whereas a foole is taken unawares by death, he is arrested, and judgement comes upon him on the sudden

I  
Hinderance  
inconsideration.

Deut. 32. 27

as a snare: therefore I say, thou must consider. And yet this is the usuall case of men, they go on in a secure sleepe in sinning whilst death and judgement breaks in upon them, which by consideration might be prevented. Therefore if you aske me what you must consider, I say, consider if this bee not thy case, as it is of many men, many owe more then they are worth, more then they know how to pay: now if they would but consider their case, and but cast up their accounts, it may be they might seeke out for a match to discharge all, but they neglect it, and are secure, & an arrest comes on them and they are cast into prison, and now it is too late. Therefore I say to every man of you, consider thy debts, thy sinnes, yea, consider those sinnes thou thinkest are past so many yeares since, that ly still, and thou hearest no more of them, I say, consider them, and bring them to mind, and consider what a sleeping sinne is. You may see it in the case of *Joab*, when hee had committed those foule murders of *Abner* and *Amasa*, the Lord let it sleepe for a time, and *Joab* was secure; but you see in due season, he having not sued out his pardon, the arrest came upon him, and *Solomon* slew him. And such was the case of the sin of *Shemei* that he committed against *David*, it lay a sleepe for a time. Such was the case of *Iosephs* brethren, in that they did against *Ioseph*, many yeares together it lay quiet, when it awaked, they saw what it was with anguish. Therefore consider what a sleeping sinne is, the forgetfulnesse of which maketh men secure. Men commit sins, and they are in health, and

and forget them, and so not considering their debts, they regard not this match, and goe not about it.

There is another part of security, wherewith men are involved, and that is, they thinke they have matched already with *Iesus Christ*, they thinke they are in an estate good enough, and to come now to make a change of it, they thinke strict preciseness, and more then needs.

And this one thing keepes many thousands off from matching, that they thinke their debts are paid, that they are in good estate, and they thinke that they are under covert. But to answer it in a word, I wish thee to consider those plaine places of Scripture, *Gal. 5. 24. Whosoever is in Christ, hath crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts*: and that in *2 Cor. 5. 17. Whosoever is in Christ is a new creature, old things are passed away, all things are become new*: and that *Iam. 2. 10. If a man saile but in one point, (willingly and constantly) hee is guilty of the breach of the whole law*: in *Ezech. 18. 10, &c.* The new translation doth not so well expresse it as the old; *If hee beget a Sonne, if hee doe any of these things, though not all, if hee beget a Sonne that is a beise, or a shedder of blood, if hee doe one of these things, if not all, but either hee eate upon the mountaines, or have defiled his neighbours wife, or have oppressed the poore, &c.* if he have done but one of these, *hee shall dye the death, his blood shall be upon his head.* Not to name more; I say, out of this I gather, that he that allowes himselfe in the least sin, he that respects not all the Commandements, and

<sup>2</sup>  
Me thinke  
their estate  
good e-  
nough.

*Gal. 5. 24*

*2. Cor. 5. 17.*

*Iam. 2. 10*

*Ezech. 18. 10*

He that al-  
lowes him-  
selfe in the  
least sin, is  
not match-  
ed to Christ

the least small particle in them, that man is not yet matched with the Lord Iesus, and therefore doe not deceive your selves with vaine words, to thinke that these excluding signes, and markes, and rules that wee give, are inventions of our owne, that wee are too strict beyond our Commission. Beloved, this plaine Word by which you shall bee judged at the last day, makes it plaine to you, that except there be such a generall reformation, except you be new in all poynts, except all your lusts be crucified, except you respect all the Commandements, and every particle thereof, unlesse that there be a generall sincerity, certainly you are excluded. Therefore I say, take all these together, that though thou be quiet for a while, and free from the arrest, that yet thou art not out of danger, thy sione is but laid asleep, &c. I say, if a man doe but seriously consider with himselfe, if hee sit downe, but one halfe houre, and consider what the shortnesse of his life is, what his danger is, and think there is another place that he must live in, for eternity, and then consider this, I may be surprized on the suddaine, as the foolish Virgins; the Bridegroom came when they did not looke for him; and if he doe, what is thy case? know this, that it is too late to be matched at that time; as when the destroying Angell came, it was too late to sprinkle the doore-postes with the blood of the Lambe; but the time of it, is the time of the Passe-over; he will come at midnight, when thou lookest not for him; and if it were to be done at  
that

that instant, no man should be damned; know this, that it must be done before; therefore consider seriously, and loose not your soules by inconsideration. But so proceed a little further to another impediment: for when a man hath considered the match, he begins to make *objections* against it, as,

First, he looks upon his husband, and he sees he must live in a poore and meane condition, he must take up his Crosse, and be despised, and contemned, and trampled upon, and when he begins to thinke of this, he is unwilling to match: for saith he, I am not willing to live after this fashion.

To this I may answer in a word; for the Lord himselfe gives a very direct and quick answer to this; saith he, I will deceive none of you, I will deale plainly with you, if you match with me, I say, your condition will be very base, and meane, and *Blessed is he that is not offended with this meane condition.* I confesse, if you match with me, you must take up your crosse, you must be persecuted, and despised, and hated of all men; therefore saith he, choose you, I leave it to you to make your owne choice; if you will not match, you may choose. But sayes he, he that is not willing to loose his life, and part with father and mother, and let lands, and credits, and liberties, and all goe, hee is not worthy of me. Wherein he implies, that the Lord is worthy to be matched with, notwithstanding all this base condition, and that thou art unworthy of him, that stickest at it. And if thou didst

*Object.*

3  
Impediment, the crosses that follow.

*Answer.*

Those that have Christ must be content to suffer.

didst know who he was, thou wouldest notwithstanding match with him to choose. If the Bridegroom, the Lord *Iesus*, should come in glory with his Bridegroomes apparell, if he should come decked with ornaments, with thousands of his Angels about him, every man would be willing to match with him; but here is the tryall what thou wilt doe at this time, it appears not yet what he is, and what he will doe, while he is now covered with a base out-side, now he is hid. But yet he deales plainely you see with us. I remember a Story of *Crates*, the Philosopher, when a virgin desired to match with him, he takes this course, he goes to her, and tells her, and shewes her his crooked-back, his staffe, and his satchell, and saith this to her, this is thy husband, and thy portion, wilt thou be content to take such an one as I? she persisted: but when she had him, she knew she had another manner of husband then she looked for. I use it but for a resemblance; for after this manner doth the Lord *Iesus* deale with us. You must suffer the crosse, and *goe out of the Camp*; this is your husband, this is your portion, the crosse is your joynture. Now thou maist choose, if thou wilt match with him, so it is. I say now to every man that is willing, that persists for all this; thou shalt have the King of heaven for thy husband, thou matchest with such an one, as shall make thee happy for ever, this is thy happinesse, thou shalt have thy worst first, the best is reserved for afterward: with the world it is quite otherwise; there you have the best first, and



and the worst followes after: Therefore here is the tryall; all the matter is to love Christ, in a base and meane estate, and I say this to thee, thou shalt have the same answer from Christ one day, that if thou be not content to match with him in a meane condition, if thou wilt not take him for worse, thou shalt never have him for better; if thou wilt not have him in a low condition, thou shalt not have him in a glorious.. *Rom. 8. 17.* hee saith, *those that suffer with him, shall also be glorified with him:* and so on the contrary, hee that doth not suffer with him, that is, hee that is not content to take him with sufferings, and with the Crosse, he shall never raigne, and be glorified in heaven with him.

*Rom. 8. 17.*

But yet men will still say, are not these hard conditions that goes with this match? if otherwise, I should much desire it. And every man is content to have the kernell, but hee would not trouble his teeth with the hardnesse of the shell.

*Object.*

And indeed, there are in appearance hard conditions. For he must be taken for a Lord, and an husband; and for this cause many will not take him, this keeps many off.

And who would not be religious, if he thought it an easie thing to be religious? Men thinke they shall be tyred and strait-laced, and never be able to endure the yoke.

But yet I say to every man that thinkes so, hee shall not finde it so, these conditions that thou thinkest so hard, are easie.

*Ans.*  
These seem-  
ing hard  
conditions  
are easie.

First

First, the Lord hath said in plaine termes; if thou wilt beleeve his Word, that *His yoke is easie, and his burthen light*: I will make it plaine to thee, thou shalt not deny it. There are but two things that make the burthen of Christ, that is his Law, to be hard, and that is either.

2  
Things  
make the  
law of Christ  
hard.

The contrariety, or,  
The disproportion.

For, there is nothing makes a thing hard, but one of these two.

I  
Contrariety

One is the contrariety betweene our wills; the reluctancy betweene our wills and Gods. Christ will have one thing, and wee another: hence comes the difficulty. If our wills were the same, then there were no difficulty, then a man lives as he would, as he list. But beloved, if thou match with him, he will give thee another will; he will take away that reluctancy and renitency, he will take away thy old nature, thou shalt have a new nature, and a new will, and so then they are easie.

2  
Dispropor-  
tion.

The other is from disproportion: if a man have a great burthen, and a little strength, the burthen proves heavy, why? not because the burthen is in it selfe heavy, but because there is but little strength. Now know, that Christ is such a husband, as that what he gives in charge, hee will give strength to doe it; this I touched the last time, in comparing the two husbands, *Rom. 7.* see there our first husband, the Law, to which every man is married, till he be matched to Christ; that is an hard yoke, he commands much  
and

Rom. 7.

and gives no strength to performe it, it commands all things exactly. But the other husband requires but Evangelicall obedience, hee commands, but that is possible, and gives strength to doe it. When againe thou servest him in newnesse of spirit; hee will raise up thy strength, and make a fitnessse, and surablenesse, and proportion betweene thy strength and it; therefore thou shalt find no such difficulty in the thing; if thou resolve on the match once, so as thou shouldest never feare the hardnesse of the burthen, that thou shouldest not bee able to obey thy husband.

In setting out the other impediments that keepe men off from being willing to match with Christ, wee will keepe still the same order, and to the similitude here, as wee have done hitherto.

The next impediment is; that wee shall not have any great dowry for the present: ther is much promised, but we shall enjoy but little of it yet; though we shall have much hereafter, yet we have it not now; this is a great impediment, and keeps off many men. It is the case of many; they think with themselves: if I match now with Christ, I have much promised, that I shall have heaven, and many things to come hereafter; but for the present, I must forsake my pleasure, my profit, my delights. Now answer this, and all is done. But beloved, it must be Christ himselfe, that must answer it: though wee be the instruments, and the meanes, yet except he speake with us, it will

Ob.

Impediment, we have little for the present.

Ans.

Why Christ  
makes us  
stay.

James 1. 12.

any man  
suffer  
temptation  
without  
that he  
be tried

will doe no good; the Lord himselfe must be his owne spokesman; yet I answer, it is true indeed, the great dowry is to come, ye must wait for it, this time is a time of serving, as *Iacob*, hee served foureteeene yeares for *Rachel* before he had her, and because he loved her, he thought the time short, he was willing to serve so long. Now if thou love Christ, if thou prize him above all; then thou wilt be willing to stay for him; and those that will not stay, it is a signe they doe not love Christ, and therefore thou art not worthy of him. You must know, that Christ makes us thus to stay a time, to know and trye his Spouse before he match with her, (indeed the match is now, but I speake of that glorious match with the Lambe at his second comming, when wee shall receive the full dowry) which the Apostle speakes of, *Iac. 1. 12. verse, Blessed is hee that endureth temptation; for when hee is tryed, hee shall receive a Crowne of life, which he hath promised to those that love him, and waite for his appearing.* Beloved, ye must be content to beleeeve for a time, enjoying is not yet come. Christ will trye our patience, our faith, he will trye whether his Spouse will take his word or no, whether she will rest upon him, whether she will beleeeve him: this is that, I say, that holds off many men, because they shall have nothing here, But therein they doe not looke upon the whole life of man; wee looke but upon part; wee onely care to provide for a short time here, and not for the whole life of man, which is eternall: and this is that which makes us to erre;

as the cause of all error in all the actions of men, is because they looke upon some part of a busi- nesse, and not upon all. When a man lookes up- on some part of a case, and not upon every part, this makes them judge amisse: so in this spiritu- all case wee erre, because wee doe not looke upon the whole life of man, to provide for our good hereafter, as well as the present. The reason is, because as the Apostle sayth, *2 Pet. 1. and 9. Ver. Wee are par-blind, and cannot see a farre off.* Indeed, this is the case of all that march with Christ, they have the worst for the present, the best is reser- ved. Indeed worldlings they have the best for the present, and the worst is reserved. Consider of it which is best, an heire that is in his minority is content to serve and doe as a servant doth, because hee knowes, notwithstanding there is a difference betweene him and a servant, he shall, hee knowes, when he comes to age, enjoy his lands, and there- fore hee is contented, though as yet hee is used as a servant. Indeed, if he knew he should not live to enjoy his lands; but dye before he comes to age, then it were somewhat, if hee were discontented to live so: but wee shall be sure to live unto them, wee shall enjoy them; as in that *2. Epistle to the Corinsh. 4. 17. 18. For the momentary lightnesse of our tribulation prepareth for us an eternall weight of Glorie: while we looke not upon things that are scene, but upon things that are not scene; for the things that are scene are temporall, but the things that are not scene are eternall.* The time that we are to be here is short, if we consider it with eternity; and beloved, if we  
did

Cause of all error.

*2 Pet. 1. 9.*

*2 Cor. 4. 17. 18.*

did but seriously thinke of the time we are to be here, and eternity hereafter; wee should not soe much sticke upon these earthly things as wee doe.

Christians  
enjoy more  
then World-  
lings for the  
present.  
Mar. 10. 29.  
30.

But to come neerer, and answer it to purpose; if thou accept of this match, thou shalt have more, even for the present, then the full vintage of the men of this world, as in that 10. Chapter of *Marke*, 29. 30. *There is no man that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sister, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, for my sake and the Gospels, but hee shall receive now in this time an hundred fold; houses, brethren, sisters, fathers, mothers, and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the world to come life everlasting: even with persecutions a man shall receive an hundred fold.* If you aske how can that be, that a man with persecution shall receive an hundred fold in this life? for answer, we must compare this place with the 2 *Cor.* 6. 10. *As sorrowfull, yet alway rejoycing; as poore, and yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things;* though they have a sorrowfull time outwardly, yet they have abundance of inward joy, which they have in the grace and favour of God. This is your usuall Proverb, *Hee is rich whom God loves.* Though a man loose credit with the world, and praise with men, and estimation, which keeps many men off; yet thou shalt have joy in God, peace of conscience, which is an hundred times better. But you will say, what if they be put into prison? shall they then have an hundred fold in this life? yes, for their imprisonment.

2 Cor. 6. 10.

Object.  
Answ.

prisonment is better then worldly mens liberty. It is said, that when *Ioseph* was put into prison, that the Lord went in with him, and was with him, and therefore it was no prison: for what is it that makes it a prison? The Lords absence, a man hath more joy in a prison wherein God is, then in a Palace without God; as you may see in *Saul*; when the Lord was departed from him, his Palace was but a prison to him. Brethren, if you beleever this, that you shall have more for the present, if ye will accept of this match, you will not any longer stand out. But if you will not beleve, for all that I have said, we have no more to say to you in brieve, but this: thou shalt have thy portion in this life, as the Prodigall sonne, he would have his portion presently: well, if you will have your portion, ye shall have it, as in that *17. Psal, 14. The men of this world, who have their portions in this life.* You shall have your portions in this life, thou shalt have thy belly filled with treasures: but remember that terrible sentence, *Thou hast thy reward.* Therefore it is no marvell, that worldlings live so contentedly, with so much outward ease; it is no marvell, I say, for their Father hath given them their portion.

Another impediment is; when parents have provided a fit match for their children, and come and propound it to their children, then they are promised to another, their hearts are set upon others: and this is a great impediment in this, and it is common. Now the Lord comes to propound this match to thee; but thou canst not forsake

E e .

those

Psa. 17. 14.

5. Imped.  
The heart  
is set to  
match with  
others.



those things that thy affections are set upon, thou hast made another choise, thy heart is set upon these outward things, thou hast promised thy love and delight to them, and thou must now refuse the fute of the *Kings Sonne*. This one day will lye heavy upon thy conscience, when as this Christ that thou hast now rejected, shall come to Iudgement, and shall sit upon his glorious Throne, and shall pronounce that heavy sentence, *Depart from me ye cursed*; and then thy conscience shall tell thee, oh he was once a suter to mee, but I had made another choice, a worse choise; which then thou findest, though it seemed pleasant for the time, yet indeed his service would have beene more pleasant and profitable, for he would have thee live but according to the rule, in temperance, sobriety, in diligence, in thy calling, and such like, which would have kept thy body in health, and preserved thy estate; and now thou hast wasted thy body in fornication, and uncleannessse, and hast wasted thy goods in drunkennessse and good-fellowship, and all riotous living: and so if we should stand to compare every particular service of each husband, we should find that our obedience to our right husband, is more pleasant then that we have now chosen; nay, wee should find that the worst actions that Christ commands, are farre more pleasant then the best of the other; as take sorrow for sinne, that wee count the worst and the hardest duty, yet even in that there goes along with it a secret sweetnessse, and

and comfort; those that have any experience in it, know it to be true: but when as thou yeeldeſt obedience to thy other husband, even in the midst of thy carnall delights, thy heart is sad, there is a kinde of perplexity goes along with it: this wee shall finde in all the actions wee doe to this wrong husband, a secret griping and stinging of conscience; and besides this, wee shall at length be paid with death.

But in our obedience to our right husband, more-over and above our comfort in his service, he will give us wages and rewards, eternall life, and all the comforts appertaining thereunto. But in brieſe, if you will not yeeld, if you will not be ruled, God will doe with you as parents doe with rebellious children, if they are stubborn, and match against their will; when as neither promises, nor perswasions will doe any good, what will they doe? Why, they will disinherite them. So if ye will be stubborn, and neither perswasions nor promises will doe no good with you, but notwithstanding all this, you will not remove your affections from off your choice; your Father shall disinherite you, you shall loose your Kingdome, you shall be damned; if you will not cut off your right hands, and cut out your right eyes that offend you, ye shall keepe them, but ye shall goe to hell with them. If you will not beleeeve us, we have no more to say to you, ye shall loose your birth-right.

Another impediment, if so be we find we stand in need of an husband to pay our debts, yet we are not

Reward of  
it.

6 Imped.  
We will not  
match yet.

disposed to marry yet. But know, if thou wilt not take the time before the time be past, thou shalt sit long enough without suiters. Christ he is a suiter by his Spirit, and we are his friends to perswade you to match with him. Now consider how that He onely must perswade: we may perswade long enough; if no other doe perswade you, you will never be wonne: but there is another, the Lord himselfe, he is his owne spokesman, and must be, or else you will never be won. And therefore, take heede of deferring when thou findest the Holy Ghost a suiter to thee, and that Christ speakes to thy heart, take heede of refusing, *his Spirit shall not alwayes strive with man*: if he knocke but once, open to him, perhaps he will knocke no more. Take heed of delayes and puttings off, bidding Christ come another time; for we commonly say, delayes are dangerous. If thou dost, thou maist loose thy suiter, and Christ may let thee sit all thy life time, and never be a suiter to thee againe. There is indeed a time, when all would match with Christ in their extremity at their deaths, as the foolish Virgins, they came when it proved too late, the doores were shut. When the arrest comes upon us, then we would match with Christ, but then it is too late, then Christ will not match with thee; then we may fly to the *horne of the altar*, as *Isaiah* did, but then Christ will say, as *Solomon* did of *Isaiah*, *Goe fall upon him, and kill him*, even there. There is a refuge in the City, but thou must be a Citizen there, before the avenger of blood comes. Then

is not a time to marry with Christ, then is a time to call to mountaines to fall upon you and cover you, and furthermore whereas thou sayest, thou wilt hereafter march with Christ, but not yet, what knowest thou but that thy soule may presently be taken from thee? and therefore you see what a deale of folly men shew in their puttings off.

Another impediment is. When the parties are brought together, to see one another; many times they do not like one another; and this is a common case: and so it is in this spirituall match; when men come to looke upon the Lord, they do not like the Lord: well, if this be thy case, if it be thus with thee, the Lord will not be so much as a suter to thee, hee counts thee an enemy. There is an antipathy betweene the Lord and many, there is an enmity; but you must know, in this there is a two-fold enmity; one out of ignorance, as *Paul*, sayes he, *I was a Blasphemer, and a persecutor, but now I am received to mercy, because I did it ignorantly through unbeliefe*. If hee had knowne the Lord, hee would not have persecuted him. But secondly, there is also a wilfull enmity against the Lord: they know the Lord, and yet they do not like him. But these men will deny this, and say, this is not the cause they come not in, whatsoever is the cause. Well, doe not deceive thy selfe; if thou love the Lord, thou wilt love his Image, thou wilt love his children which are his Image. If thou hatest those that beare his Image, thou hatest the Lord himselfe.

<sup>7</sup>  
Impedi-  
ment. men  
doe not like  
Christ.

Enmities  
double.

And therefore doe not deceive thy selfe: if thou bearest a secret hatred and dislike of that strictnesse and holinesse, that is in the Saints; if thou hast an inward grudge to that which is Gods Image, thou hatest God himselfe.

But perhaps thou wilt say, I hate him because he is an hypocrite; if hee were the child of God I would love him, but I hate his hypocrisie.

But take heede, that when thou striketh an hypocrite, a Saint lyes not a bleeding; so also when a man lyeth under a sharp and powerfull Ministry, and thou bearest hatred and dislike of it, thou hatest the Lord himselfe, whose ordinance it is. This was the case of the Iewes, when the Apostles had shewed them the Lord Iesus, and they saw all was rejected, what followed? we have no more to say to you, Christ would no longer be a suter to them. Seing ye reject us, and will not receive this word of salvation, loe now we turne to the Gentiles, and those that will receive us. And therefore brethren, take heed of disliking the Lord, when he comes a suter to you, doe not lay false aspersions upon him, and his wayes, and children, doe not beleeeve false aspersions laid upon him by others; as those that were sent to spy Canaan, they brought up evill reports of that Land; what followed? not onely they were excluded out of the Land, but also all those that beleevd them.

Now thus we have shewed you the match, and given you sometiyals to know, whether you are matched with Christ or no, as also what may stirre

stirre you up to accept this match, if yee finde upon examination, that ye are not matched with him, also the impediments that keepe men off from the match: that if any of them be your case, ye may remove it. But brethren, all this can doe nothing to procure this match; this will not worke upon you, except the Lord be his owne spokke-man to winne your love, hee it is that must winne you. Men are like dead men when wee speake to them; but if Christ speake not by his Spirit, they are dead still; it is hee that must shew you your debt and your danger, and the beauty and excellency of your husband, and must remove the impediments.

And seeing that now you are to receive Christ offered in the Sacrament, this point may be a great helpe to strengthen your faith. When a man promises to match with one, this helps well forward to the match: but when the man is in the Church, and offers himselfe to match with thee, then wee cannot choose but beleeeve it: *Hee that eateth and drinketh this unworthily, he is guilty of the body and bloud of the Lord:* therefore doe not take it hand over head, but examine whether thou standest in need of Christ, canst thou set a price upon him, as the cheifest thing thou wantest? The great match is made in Baptisme: this is but the renewing of the Nuptials, and new Actes of taking and receiving Christ. Consider then, if thou have matcht with Christ before, else if thou comest hither, this is a great provocation to the Lord: for that

digression  
to the Sacra-  
ment.

which is required of thee now, is, that thou take Christ with more willingnesse, still that thou come with more desires and longing after the Lord Iesus, or else thou dost receive unworthily. Consider every time thou comest, of what need thou standest in of Christ, and in this thing thou must take some paines with thy heart, every time thou comest, to see more need thou standest in of Christ, and also examine strictly what thou hast done amisse, and worke thy heart to unfained sorrow, and make up all breaches before thou comest, as thou dost with men, which is a very commendable thing, and if thou have any request to put up to him, this is a speciall day of hearing. Whatsoever jewell thou wouldst have to beautifie thy selfe, that is, whatsoever graces thou wantest to beautifie thy soule, what change of rayment thou wouldst weare to adorne thy conversation, what temptation hath long haunted thee, thou canst not be rid of, aske of thy husband now upon this day; this is the marriage day; this is a faire opportunity to aske any thing of thy husband: aske thy husband now, he will not deny thee, nay whatsoever thou wantest for this life, for thy body, aske it now, for all is thine; whatsoever thou desirest, any gift for soule or body, whatsoever it be that thou wouldst have him to take from thee, that hurts thee, or whatsoever thou wouldst have him give thee, to doe thee good, aske it: I dare be bold to say, he will not deny thee; for if *Herod* because of his oath, would not deny the daughter

ter



ter of *Herodias*, even to the halfe of the Kingdome, dost thou thinke that thy husband will deny thee any thing, that hath given himselfe to thee? hath he given thee the great? and dost thou thinke that he will deny thee the lesse, if it be good for thee? if he doe deny thee, it is because it is not convenient; or else, thou dost not aske it in duetime, or else he will give thee a better thing.

To

of

THE  
CHURCHES  
CARIAGE,  
OR  
DVTY.

DELIVERED IN SUNDRY  
Sermons at *Lincolnes* Inne.

By the late learned and Reverend Divine,  
JOHN PRESTON,

Doctor in Divinity, Chaplaine in Ordinary to his  
Majesty, Master of *Immanuel* Colledge in *Cambridge*,  
and sometimes Preacher at *Lincolnes* Inne.

---

Published by *John* ~~*Thomas*~~ *Ball*, } B<sup>re</sup> in Divinity.

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EPH<sup>s</sup>. 5. 33.

*Let the wife see that she reverence her husband.*

2 COR. 11. 2.

*For I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you a  
chast virgin to Christ.*

LONDON,

Printed by *R. Badger* for *N. Bowne*, at the Royall Exchange,  
and *R. Harford* at the gilt Bible in *Queenes-head-  
Alley*, in *Pater noster-Row*.

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# THE CHVRCHES CARIAGE.

EPHES. 5. 22. 23. 24.

*Wives, submit your selves unto your owne husbands,  
as unto the Lord.*

*For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ  
is the head of the Church: and he is the Saviour of  
the body.*

*Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let  
the wives be to their owne husbands in every thing.*



HE Scope of the Apostle is, to  
shew that wives ought to be subject  
to their husbands, which he infor-  
ceth upon them with this argu-  
ment; for so is the Church to  
Christ. My scope is onely to speake of the lat-  
ter: for whereas formerly I pressed men to receive  
*Iesus Christ*; now because the cheifest thing they  
sticke at is, being subject to him (which yet is a  
thing necessary, if they receive him aright) for  
men

Scope.

Gen. 3. 16.

men having lived all their lives at liberty, would doe still, although it be the condition of those that are married to Christ, to be subject to him, as it is of the woman to be to the man, as appears by that law first given. 3. Gen. 16. *Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and hee shall rule over thee*, that is, thy will shall be subject to his. Now this Text shewes both, that the Church is subject to Christ, and the reasons why it should be so: there are three things in it.

1 That every man that takes Christ is subject to him: that is laid downe positively in the Text, the Church is subject to Christ.

2 That every man that takes him ought to bee so.

3 That it is best for them so to be: and to that end the Apostle gives two reasons, for he is their head and Saviour.

I will bind up all into one point, that,

*Doct.*

Every one  
that takes  
Christ ought  
to be subject  
and it is best  
for him.

*Every one that doth, or will take Christ, hee is, and ought to be subject to him, and it is best for him so to be.*

He that takes Christ, is subject to him; for so soone as there is an union made betweene the soule and Christ, so soone there is a power goes out from him, which bowes and fashions the heart, and makes it willing to keepe his Lawes, it causeth such a motion in the heart, as is in the members from the head: so soone as the will is willing to doe a thing, there is a readinesse also in the members, and the reason is, because there is the same spirit that is in the head transfused into

into the members, and so here the same spirit is communicated from Christ by vertue of this union to the members, and as soone as that union shall be perfect, and the Spirit shall dwell in all fulnesse in us, then we shall have a full readinesse to obey him.

Now because it is but in part; therefore in regard of the degrees of it, there is much wanting in this readinesse to obedience, yet so, as there is in some measure some such inclination, though the members are weake and *paralyticall*, and contrary humors are in them, which much hinder their readinesse; yet so as there is an inclination in the mind, an intrinsecall aptnesse to be subject to Christ in all things.

That he that takes Christ ought to be subject. Now thou art matched with him, thou art engaged, thou hast covenanted with him, *Cor. 7.23.* He is thy Lord, and hath bought thee, and thou hast sold thy selfe to him; yet hee hath bought thee of thy selfe, so as thou art not *in iuris*. It is an usuall thing for men to bethinke with themselves, how shall I bestow this day? and men forget that they are servants; for they are not to spend it in what is pleasant and profitable for themselves, for God hath bought them of themselves, and as a servant is to aske his master every morning what worke hee would have him to doe that day, so are ye; not a jot of strength is thine owne.

The last is, that is is best for men to be subject to him, and if men were perswaded that it were best

2  
1 Cor. 7.23.



best for them now at this time to be subiect to him, they would come in: but it is one thing to thinke it generally best, and best for me at this time in my particular case. Now this is it, I will shew you, and take the reasons in the Text.

Because he is an head, and that in foure respects.

In regard of Sovereignty.

In regard of preeminency and excellency.

Because hee gives life to the Church, as the head doth to the body.

Because hee is a guide to the Church, as the head is to the members.

Because hee is their Sovereigne Lord and Prince, for this subjection is in nature to be subiect to him that is our Lord, and whom wee find set over us, and we thinke it no disparagement to be so. To subiect our selves to an equall indeed, we may and doe thinke much at it: therefore now thinke, that he is a Prince, and thou art a base creature; and dost thou thinke much to be subiect to him: all disobedience comes from this; that wee thinke our selves too good to obey him: as hee said, so men say secretly in their hearts, who is the Lord, that I should obey? and this they doe in every sinne.

And whereas it may be said, there are many great men set over men, which they will say, they see no great reason why they obey them; I am of more excellent parts then he: this may be objected against many Kings; and indeed, unlesse they do excell, obedience doth not come off willingly, nor naturally.

Therefore

<sup>I</sup>  
Best for  
men to take  
Christ.

Reas.

<sup>I</sup>  
He is a head

<sup>I</sup>  
He is their  
Sovereigne

Therefore in the second place consider, he is a head for preeminence, *Col. 1. 18. 19. He is the head of the body, the Church, that in all things he might have the preeminence; for it pleased the Father, that in him all fulnesse should dwell*, that as in the head there are all the excellencies of the body in all fulnesse, the senses and the understanding, &c. so in him: now if a man had all excellencies in all fulnesse above all other men, all the world would obey that man. See it in beasts; an Eagle being the excellentest of fowles, nature hath made it the King of all: and were there such a man among men, there would be no resistance in nature to such an obedience to him. Now Christ is such an one, full of wisdom, full of love and meeknesse, &c. such an one as thy heart can wish.

In the third place, all this is for thy profit, if thou be obedient to him, for thou mightest say, why should I obey him? what is all this his excellency to me? when we see the government wee live in, to be for our good, then we are willing to submit: if we had such a Governour as is mentioned in *Judges*, that would spend his fatnesse and his sweetnesse for us, him we would obey. Now *Iesus Christ* hath spent his fatnesse for your good, and all this fulnesse that is in him, is for the good of the body, *Ephes. 1. ult.* speaking of Christ and the body, hee calls the body the fulnesse of *him who filleth all in all.*

The body is the fulnesse of him; for as the head makes not a compleate man without the body,

2  
A head of  
preemi-  
nence.  
*Col. 1. 18. 19*

3.  
For their  
profit.

*Ephes. 1. ult.*

so nor Christ without his Church, and yet least this might be thought too much to be spoken of the body, that it should be the fulnesse of *Christ*, therefore withall he shewes that it is Christ which fills the Church, *It is the fulnesse of him who fills all in all*, emptying out his fulnesse into them, filling all with all the excellencies that are in himselfe. No excellency is in him, but he stamps it upon the body; for he received it for their sakes. As the common Conduit receives not water for it selfe, but for others; so is he the common Conduit of Grace, a head which communicates the same life to his members he hath in himselfe, which was the third thing.

4  
Their guide

But ah! you will say I have no need of all this, nor of being subject to him; yes but thou hast, for thou canst not live without him: for as the Husband is said to be the guide of the Wife, *Hee is the guide of thy Youth*, as the Scripture speaks; so is he to thee, and without him we are in this world like men in the wide sea without a guide; if left alone, wee shall fall upon some rocks, or sands or other, and so perish: He is thy guide, and there is reason to be subject to a guide, a folly to leave thy guide in a wood, and step out of the way from him. Nay he is a guide that *doth guide thy feete in the wayes of peace*; the wayes he will lead thee in, lead into prosperity and peace.

2 Reas.  
He is the Sa-  
viour of his  
Church.

The second reason in the text is, *Hee is the Saviour of his Church*, he hath saved them already from the guilt and power of their sinnes, and hee is so continually, and thy safety consists in being obe-  
dient

dient to him: looke how many acts of disobedience, so many steps from under thy shelter into the storme, from out of the shade into the scorching Sun-shine. All the commandements wee have from him, are things, by which our lives are maintained: as fishes live in the water, so wee in the commandements, for they are our elements: so as withdrawing thy selfe from the commandements and going out of them, tends to destruction; and it is as if a man should see a fish going out of the water: every such motion tends to death. If therefore a man would consider when he is about to commit a sin, that this act tends to death, and that to be subject to the commandement is my safety, hee would certainly keepe within compasse: if the commandements tended to destruction, we ought to doe them; for what are we but Gods vassals? he hath bought us. As they in the old Law might doe what they would with their servants they had bought with their money, so might God: but when every commandement shall tend to thy good, so as thou canst not devise a better way for thy selfe than to obey them, wilt not thou much rather bee subject? 10. *Deut. 13.* In the former verses he had shovne that God had done great things for them, and therefore might doe as other masters, that command their servants that which is for their owne advantage, and not for their servants; and so God might do, and thou oughtest to be subject to him: but sayes hee in the thirteenth verse, what doth the Lord require of thee, but to keepe the commandements

His commandements for our good.

the first of the commandments of

I  
the first of the commandments of

*Deut. 10. 13*

the first of the commandments of

of the Lord which hee commands thee for thy good? Thou maist thinke that to sanctifie the Sabbath is not for thy good, but now thou maist thinke happily by thy travell on that day, and plotting thy businesse to further thy wealth: or suppose that God bid thee be bold for him, and stand out for the profession of the truth, thou thinkest it may be thereby thou shalt loose much; and that by stepping out of his way, thou maist take in some convenience, or balke some crosse, which for doing his will would befall thee; but thou art deceived, thou shalt find that this shall be for thy ruine, and though thou canst not see how this should be for thy good; yet shur thine eyes, beleeve it, for it will be so.

*Use.*  
To exhort  
to come in  
to Christ.

The use is, to exhort you to be willing to come to Christ: You see this great objection taken away, that men are loth to be subject to him. I will further shew what it is to bee subject, and so adde motives.

If you would know what subjection is.

**I**  
Subjection  
what.

Subjection is, when an inferiour willingly submits to a superiour; there are two things in it.

**I**  
To a superiour  
willingly.

It must be between an inferiour and a superiour; for if a superiour doth it, it is not subjection, but yeelding; if an equall doth it, it is an agreement, compact, not a subjection.

It must be willingly, or else it is not said to bee subjection: to bee carryed captive is not to bee made subject, but when a man submits out of an inward inclination of his will

Will, then it is said to be obedience and subjection.

The second thing is, what we must be subject to, and they are three things, first the counsell of Christ. Secondly, the Commandements of Christ. Thirdly, his providence, to be willing to be disposed of by him. And these three doe answer to all that is in a man. For 1. there is his mind or understanding; now to that answers counsell. Secondly, there is his will; to that answers commandement. Thirdly, affections; they answer to his providence.

First, wee must be subject to the Counsell of Christ, that is, to thinke his wayes, and what hee commands, to be the wisest and the best way. And this is one thing a Wife owes to her Husband, to be subject to his opinion: and *Paul*, when hee would expresse his obedience, sayes, *I consulted not with flesh and blood*, that is, with my owne reason; but *I brought my mind into subjection to Christs mind*: I was willing to thinke his way the best, in *2 Cor. 10. 5*. This is called Subjection, namely, the bringing of every thought into subjection. The originall of disobedience is refractorinesse of thoughts, whereby a man thinks his way better then God's way, and therefore chooseth it, for every man doth what hee thinks best, and therefore in *Pro. 23. 4*. *Salomon* counselling men not to labour to be rich, because a man would say in his owne thoughts, why, it is good to be rich, therefore sayes he, *Cease from thine owne Wisdome*, that is, submit thy wisdome to Gods, hee knowes what

2  
We must be  
subject unto.

1  
The counsell  
of Christ.

2 Cor. 10. 5.

Pro. 23. 4.

is better for thee: walke in thy calling without seeking inordinately to be rich; and if God cast riches upon thee, so it is. And so likewise a man that thinkes credit in regard of gifts, learning, parts, a goodly thing, cease from thine owne wisdom, it being but as the Apostle saith *vanitas* an empy thing; a thing blowne up by mens breathes: seeke not after it; follow his counsell. And thirdly, so for pleasure, thou thinkest this or that thing to be most pleasant, cease from thy own wisdom, abstaine from it, and thou shalt have it some other way.

2.  
His commands.

The second thing are his commands: if thou seest he hath commanded a thing, which thou seest no reason for, nay, thou seest a reason against it, yet doe not question it. The will of man is still objecting: See this now in *Adam* and *Saul*: In the commandement given to *Adam*, there is nothing but a meere command; 'tis likely hee saw no reason for it; yet see how God chargeth him, *Hast thou eaten of that I commanded thee thou shouldst not taste?* *Saul* thought he had good reason on his side, to spare the kine for sacrifice, but did not I command thee the contrary? The servant is not to examine his masters ground, but to doe his will.

3.  
His providence.

Lastly, wee must be subject to his providence, and all the passages of it. Looke what variety of conditions, of sickenesse and health, good repere and ill report thou goest through. God requires that all thy affections should be subject without murmuring; if he will have thee lye under an ill report without cause a long time, it is his providence



vidence, submit; and whereas men will say, if I were thus, or thus in such a condition first, then I would be content; what is this, but to make his will *Regulam regulam*?

The third thing are motives to be subject.

From the nature of subjection; which is as it was defined; that the inferiour ought to be subject to the superiour; so as there is reason for this, if thou be an inferiour to him, and when a man sees reason, he will not be stubborne. Now, that there is reason for this; looke through the whole universe. That which is most base is lowest, and if there should not be such a subordination, what confusion would there be, as if the waters should overflow the earth, or the fire possess the place of the ayre? As in the body of nature; so political; if servants should not be subject to their masters, inferiours to superiours, what confusion would it breed? *Eccles. 10. 5. 6. for the servant to be on horse-backe, and the master on foot*, this is an evill, and a folly. So in the body of man, for the humours to be predominant; it brings sickness and death; so in the soule; for reason to be below, and the affections above, what disorder is it? So that there is reason, that in all things the inferiour should be subject to the superiour.

Consider who it is you are to be subject to.

It is to him that is able to doe you much good, and one that is willing to recompence thee to the utmost. Why are men so willing to be subject to Kings, and doe them service? because they are able to advance them; and therefore men will doe

Motives to this subjection.

I

From the nature of subjection.

*Eccles. 10. 5. 6.*

2

Who we are subject unto.

I

One that is able to do us good.

any base offices for them, even violate their consciences: but in being subject to God, thou shalt not be subject to base, but honourable services, and thou shalt get much by it also. As *Balak* said to *Balaam*, *Am I not able to preferre thee?* so may I say of God, and of others, even of Kings, as *Saul* said of *David*, *Can David give you Vineyards, &c?* Can Kings give you what God can give you? why is there such seeking to the Court, but that men are perswaded of getting profit and honour? And is it not God that sets up whom he will, pulls downe whom he will: doth whatsoever he will in the earth, and in the sea: which if considered, men would be ambitious of serving him.

2  
He is able  
to do us  
much hurt  
1 Pet. 5. 6

Secondly, hee is able to doe you much hurt: and that is another reason of our subjection to Princes, and therefore, 1. *Pet.* 5. 6. hee bids us humble our selves under his mighty hand; that is, God hath a mighty hand, able to bring you into subjection, and therefore doe it willingly, *Humble your selves*. Doe you provoke him to anger? are you stronger then he? is hee not able to bring you downe? In *Ezekiel* there be foure Emblemes of his power; God compares their great men to Eagles, the masters of all birds; to Cedars, that over-shadow all the trees of Eden; to Dragons, that doe live in the water, and doe drinke it up as a river; and to an excellent Cherub; now God to shew his power, sayes, that hee will deplume that Eagle, loppe the boughes of that Cedar, uncover that Cherub, put a hooke into

into the nostrils of that Dragon: so that God is able to doe the greatest men in the world hurt.

Thridly, God is exceeding munificent, his goodnesse is great. If one hath a father that is full of goodnesse, an ingenuous sonne would not disobey him, because hee would not grieve him; now God will spare thee, *as a father spares his sonne that serves him*: hee will keepe thee still in the house, notwithstanding all thy rebellions.

3  
His munificence.

Last motive is taken from our selves. It is for thy good to be subject to him: which if men thoroughly apprehend, they would not flicke, though it were a thing burthensome to them. If a Physician prescribes thee an hard dyer, to which thou hast no good will in it selfe; yet if thou be told it is for thy good, then thou art willing; and thus it is with the Commandements. But say, is not liberty an excellent thing? is it not better to live as a man lists? Indeed if the mind of a man were framed as it ought to be, it were so; but seeing thy heart is possessed withenours, &c. it is not best for thee to be at liberty, for one that is well in his wits, it is good to be at liberty, but not for one in a frensie; againe, for thee to follow thine owne will, is to subject thy selfe more to the disease, but when thou dost what God commands thee, thou dost follow the precept of the Physician. For every man lyas it were *Inter morbum & medicum*; if thou subject thy selfe to God, thou growest out of bondage

3  
Motive from our selves.

to the disease to further life and liberty, but when thou obeyest thy selfe, thou art brought in bondage to sinne, which is the disease of thy soule. Now bondage properly is this, when one is subject to one that is not our proper Commander, or when it is to our hurts; and therefore now to bee subject to a Father is not bondage, so nor to God, hee being our naturall and proper Commander. Now one of these two you must be subject to, either the law of sinne, or of righteousness. Consider now which of these is bondage, which liberty.

Every creature hath a certaine rule given it, and so long as it keepes close to that rule, so long it is well with it: and so it is with men, whilst they are subject to the Law, which is their proper rule; to be subject to the contrary rule, that is bondage. But thou wilt say, I finde it a pleasant life, to bee subject to my lusts. But what is the reason of that? because it is agreeable to the present disposition of thy soule: but yet know this, that thou hast another radicall disposition in thee, in which thou wert created, to which the Commandements are more pleasant then the satisfying of thy lusts. As now take the constant disposition of thy body; meate, and drink is pleasant to it, but indeed in a time of sickness, not meat, but something else is more pleasant; yet so as the pleasantness of meate to one in health, is the greater of the two. Now this is a rule in Philosophie, that those things that are agreeable to nature are *jucunda per se*, and all times,

It is pleasant.

I  
It is agreeable to the soule.

times, the other nor for, and but for a fit, and so now finde it pleasing to thee; but whilst thou art in such an humour. Now the things that God commands agree to the first constitution of thy soule, and therefore they are the better choice, and in themselves more pleasant, and the obedience to them, is like the obedience of the members to the head; but the obedience of them to sin is the wringing them the wrong way.

Against peace is pleasant. *Psal. 133. 1. It is a pleasant thing for Brethren to dwell in unity.*

Discords in a family are unpleasant. Now whilst thou obeyest sinne, it breakes thy peace with God thy Head, and thou livest an unquiet life; but as it is, *Gal. 6. 16. As many as walke according to the rule of Gods Commandments, peace is upon them,* and that is pleasant.

Againe, it brings Iesus Christ into the soule; and he brings joy with him; for when he comes into the heart, hee comes as the Sonne into a roome with light, and joy, and peace. I find one similitude more in the words, to expresse our union with Christ: and indeed the Scripture is much in expressing of this union; now it is a sure rule, that what the Scriptures bestow much words on; we should have much thoughts on, and what the Holy Ghost uttereth most, we should prize most, as in this union with Christ, which is the foundation of our Salvation and of all graces.

Now different similitudes in Scripture goodly expresse some new thing; and this that he is the Head and Saviour of the body. It will bring to our minds some other differing notion concerning

It brings peace.  
*Psal. 133. 1.*

2  
It brings peace.  
*Psal. 133. 1.*

*Gal. 6. 16.*

3  
It brings Christ into the soule.

4

5

ning

Doff.

Christ is the  
head and  
Saviour of  
his Church  
and every  
member.  
1 Cor. 11. 3.

ning this union then the former did, it will bring new light that we shall see further into the riches of this glorious mystery.

The point is, that *Christ is the Head, and Saviour of his Church, and of every member.* I adde this last, for so you shall find it. 1 *Corinth.* 11. 3. That the *Head of every man is Christ*: and this similitude shewes that the union betwixt Christ and us, is more than the union of a politicke head and body, so as *wee are flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone*, as it is in the thirtieth verse of this Chapter.

1

In that Christ loves and cherisheth every one united to him, as every man doth his owne flesh. Put case a member bee more deformed than another, there be an Ulcer in it; yet a man loves it, because it is his flesh.

2

Hee is sensible of all the paine, and ease they feelee, as the Head is, of what the Members doe.

3

Hee communicates Sense and Motion to every man; without him, every man being dead, and not able to moove a step, in the wayes of God.

4

He guides, directes, counsels every member upon all occasions, suggests wisdom what to doe.

But there are three other speciall respects, in regard of which he is called an Head.

I

Eph. 1. 22.

In regard of authority. *Ephes.* 1. 22. *God hath appointed him over all things to bee Head.* Hee hath committed the Kingdome of the Mediatourship to his Sonne.

In

In regard of preeminence, Col. 1. 18.

In regard of influence of life, Ephes. 1. 23. his headship is made to consist in this, in filling his body, which in it selfe is a drye empty thing, and he fills them all, that is, every corner, and secondly with all, that is, all variety of graces; so as they have nothing, but what they have from him.

The use of these three in particular, secondly, in that he is a head in generall.

If Christ be so a head, as he is a Governour and commander; it is easy to know what followes then; let us be obedient and live according to his lawes, in those doxologies which are given to Christ, this is one, *To him be all dominion*: all the dominion that is in parents over their children, Kings over their people, are but rivulets out of that Sea. In the 9. of *Isay*, 6. the Governour is said to be upon his shoulder, so as he rules all the world, only with this difference, that he rules his Church with an inclinative disposition, as the head rules the members, but others with a rod of iron; so as he brings all under his feet, and makes them stoupe; and it is profitable for us to consider what division wee are of; for First, there are some of the kingdom of his sonne, translated into his kingdom. 1. Col. others are as Cain, vagabonds, lawlesse persons, that are not the Lords portion, and though these doe what they list, yet thou must doe as by a rule, from morning: till night, to all thy businesse, undertake no action but by rule: there is not the least action but there is rule for it in the generall

2

Col. 1. 18.

3

Eph. 1. 23.

Vse 1.

To be obedient to Christ as head

Isay. 9. 6.

Col. 1.



All things  
to be done  
by rule.

Obj.  
Ans.  
It brings  
peace.  
Isay, 9. 7.

nerall find out that rule, so use recreations, eate and drinke by rule.

If you object, that there are some things which a man may doe *animi causa*; so the Apostle sayes, he would not for his mind sake. I answer, you must even doe these things by rule. Tis true that a man may have in his choice to doe a thing, or not to doe a thing; for then a thing is indifferent: yet there is a rule to be lookt to in these things, viz. That Christ hath given a man this liberty: so men should order their speeches by rule; not to be vaine at any time, not in the least word. But you will say, this is a bondage. Answer: no, but it is for thy benefit; for the more thou walkest by rule, the more peace shall be upon thee. It is observable, *9. Esay, 7.* that these two things are put together; *Of the increase of his government, and of his peace there shall be need*: to this end, to shew that as his government increaseth in mens hearts and is enlarged, so as a man is made more subject to him, so also peace increaseth. In those that are most subject, there is most peace: and therefore he is called the Prince of peace; for where hee rules as a Prince, there is that peace which he, as a mighty Prince, is able to procure to you. And to this purpose is that copulation of being a Head and a Saviour in the Text, as I have observed before: if any man goeth from out of his government, hee shall find thornes, unquietnesse, and restlesnesse of spirit: if they walke by the rule, they shall have perfect peace, perfect mercies: if you walke unevenly with him,

him, hee will walke unevenly with you.

Is he a Head in regard of excellency; not onely because God hath put him into the highest place, but because he hath a finesse in him, all fullnesse: choose him then, take him before any thing else; for he is the best, and will preponderate whatsoever comes in competition with him. There are no excellencies, that are in the creatures, which are out of him, but all in him. And therefore thou must choose him altogether, and make him the adequate object of thy soule, in whom thou art fully satisfied; bring thy heart to this frame, to be content to be stript of every thing, thinking it enough to have the Lord; 2 Cor. 10. *And wee are compleat in him, who is the head of all Principalitie and power*: his scope is this; in the 6. verse before, he had exhorted them: that as they had taken Christ; (it being the same word that is in *Iohn*, 1. 12,) so they would walke in him, being fully contented with him; and let no man deceive you in Philosophie, that is, whereas men teach you excellent rules of morall Philosophie; yet reckon not these as excellencies added to Christ, but abound you in faith in him, for we are compleat in him; if any thing were wanting in him, then indeed we might seeke out to other things. Learne to apply this to your particular occasions; say, I care for no mans friendship, nor wealth; it is enough, I have the Lord alone; I am compleat in him, looke for all from him; and then you will doe all for him. Hee that lookes for any thing; from the creature, will doe so much for it.

Every

V/c 2.

To choose  
Christ for a  
head.

Col 2. 10

Iob 1. 12

Every benefit hath an office joyned, and so much men serve sinne; as they looke for pleasure from it, and so much service as is done to the creature, so much is taken off from God; and therefore say, I will not apply my selfe to you, but to Christ. And so if a man be to preach the Gospell, he that thinketh himselfe compleate in Christ, will not care for mans day: so if a man come to some action of tryall, wherein he shall loose some speciall freinds, and get great enemies, if hee thinke himselfe compleate in Christ, he cares not. So in walking in the exercise of a mans calling, if a man thinkes himselfe compleate in Christ, he will thinke it enough to doe his duty; so as men may receive profit by it, and as for wealth, hee leaves that to the Lord, in whom hee is compleate.

*Quest*

But you will say, how shall I live in this world then? I have credit to looke to, and wife and children.

*Ans.*

God supplies what we loose for him.

*Ans.* God is able to do abundantly for you, if you have him. When *Moses* was content to let *Pharaoh* goe, and his great place in *Egypt* goe, and so suffer affliction with the people of God, God made him a greater Prince then ever hee was; so Christ, because hee endured the shame, and the speaking against, and the meanest condition that ever man had, therefore a *Phil.* God gave him a greater Name above all names. *Abraham* let his Country go, but God gave him a greater Country, and in his seed made him heire of the world; so if a man be a Minister of the Word; let him not thinke

*Phil. 2.*

think with himselfe how to provide best for himselfe, but how he may doe most good; and therefore not to take care for preferment or maintenance, in the 10. of *Matth. 10. Luke*, when Christ sent his Disciples out to preach the Gospel; Hee bids them *take no money; nor girdle, to maintaine them; nor no staffe to defend them from injuries, nor salute any man by the way, that is, doe not stand upon officious complements to get friends. You goe about the Lords worke, and I will provide for you, and therefore hee repeates this 22. Luk. 35.* when he was going out of the world, asking them if when he did send them out thus, they did lacke any thing, to which they answered, no. Then learne by this, not to looke after maintenance; and this may be said to every Minister of the Gospel; preferre Christ, and he will preferre you. Every one desires a preeminence, a place above his brethren; the way to get it, is to bee for Christ: *of his owne will he begot us, that we might be the first fruits of all the creatures.* When a man hath chosen Christ, then hee is made the cheife of the creatures, hee excels all others, as Roses and Lillies excell thornes; so that if you choose and make him your Head, he will make you the Head and cheife of all things else.

From this, that he is a Head in regard of influence, a Head that fills all in all; that then wee would be carefull to draw from him, that which may fill us, and this is the life is made of this, 4. *Ephes. 15, 16: Let us follow the truth in love, that we may grow up in him in all things, who is the Head from*

*Mat. 10.  
Luk. 10.*

*Mat. 10.  
Luk. 10.  
Ephes. 4. 15,  
16.*

whom the whole body is joyntly together, &c. The  
 scope of the Apostles is to shew us, wee should  
 grow; and how to grow; adding this motive to  
 it, to stirre them to it, that Christ is their head,  
 able to fill every empty crevis, and that should  
 stirre them up to bring their hearts to him; that  
 so you may grow up into him, that is, when you  
 heare he is a Head that fills you, stand not at a  
 stay, but grow up to him, there being as great a  
 necessity for you to grow, as for others to come  
 in: and therefore (sayes he) continue not chil-  
 dren: if they aske how they should grow up into  
 him; hee bids them follow the truth in love, that is,  
 as you get more light into divine truths, and have  
 your hearts affected with them; which is meant by  
 love, so much is added to you; grow then; for o-  
 therwise how is it said, that the Word doth build  
 us up: as S. Paul, when he told those that Hee was  
 to leave them, and they knew not what to doe when  
 he were gone, to grow, he tells them this, I leave  
 you to God, and the Word of his grace, to build you up.  
 Now how doth the Word doe it, but by revea-  
 ling truth, new truths; which if they affect the  
 heart, men grow up into Christ. *Hee will I beseech*  
*In that it is said, growing up into Him;* it is added;  
 to difference that growth which is out of Him  
 in morall Vertues; men may grow in them; and  
 yet not grow up into Him: but to grow up  
 into Him; is to grow more emptied of our selves  
 and selfe-conceits and fuller of him; so as he may  
 bee greater in us; for wee define Grad: otherwise  
 then the morall Philosophers define Vertue;

2  
 To grow up  
 in Christ.

ward of  
 ourselves  
 and most  
 of all

they define it to be that which frames the soule to right reason, that is, to doe that which is best for himselfe and his converse with men; but wee grow in another manner, to be that which frames and exerciseth every faculty of the soule to the Lord, and therefore there is no growth in grace, unlesse it be into Christ, doing all for him, unlesse we be taken off of our owne bottome, and set upon him. Now there are things further mentioned in that place, as meanes of this growth.

Definition of morall vertue.

To receive all from him, from whom as the words are, &c. and therefore to keepe the heart nigh to him; that therefore which hinders growth is that which causeth distance betwixt God and us. Now the cementing qualities that doe joyne us to him, are faith and love, and that which loosneth us from him is selfe dependance, and selfe seeking, and all things else which thrust in betwixt God and you, as vaine hopes and vaine feares.

To keep the heart nigh to Christ.

Keepe in the fellowship of the Saints, for they receive from Christ onely as they are knit and compacted together: if the branch be divided from the tree and the roote, there is no growth. Let them looke to it that take no heed of their company. There are many mutuall duties to be performed together, by which the Saints grow: be one of their fellowship in conference, prayer, &c. if thou wouldst grow.

Fellowship with the Saints.

By that which every joyne furnisheth to us. There are certaine Communion bands and sinewes, by which

Sinewes by which grace is conveyed.



which grace is conveyed, by which is meant all those *usibicals* of grace, all the ordinances of God: he therefore that prayes most, heales most conscionably, and is in company of those most which excell in grace, whence something will drop that may increase grace and truth, such men grow most; though Christ be the fountaine, yet grace is conveyed by these as the meanes: therefore using these meanes, looke up to him to open the fountains.

There is an effectuall power, a nutritive faculty in every one that hath life in him, which is a meanes of growth, according to the effectuall working in the measure of every part, by which a man makes use of every thing suggested to him, still receives profit from the word read or preached, or from Gods providence, some nutriment from them all: as you say of good wits, that they make use of every thing, so of good hearts; and that is according to the measure in every part; yet so as the least bud hath this effectuall power in it's measure to draw from the root, as well as the greatest branches; some have a greater measure, because they take in not for themselves, but digest and deliver it to others; for in the body there are some members, that receive for themselves, and for distribution, as the liver, heart, &c. And therefore think with thy selfe, I have a greater degree in the Church of God, therefore I must looke to receive more then others, or else there will be an *over*. I must pray more and read more, that so growing more

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A Nutritive  
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in thy selfe, thou maist be able to distribute unto others. Let me adde this, take heed you doe not dead this effectuall power, for then you will not be able to draw much, or else not to concoct it. You will say, how may it be deaded? by worldly mindednesse, or by Sinne not repented of.

This weakens the nutritive faculty, the more spiritual every man is, the better conscience that he keepes, and that will quicken the nutritive faculty, for what makes a member to draw nourishment, but emptinesse and hunger? so that the more we thirst after other things, the lesse we shal draw from Christ.

The use is of Triall whether you be in Christ or no, by your obedience and subjection to him. The Church, that is, every member of it, is subject unto Christ and obedient unto him in all things. That which God maketh a rule of his owne judgment, as that by which he judgeth of every man, that is a sure rule for every man to judge himselfe by that which we shall be judged by; at the last day, is a sure rule to apply to our selves for the present. Now by our obedience and workes, hee judgeth us, *Hee will give to every man according to his workes, Rom. 2.* that is, he will not looke to their good meanings and profession, but to their actions and workes, because our reall taking of Christ appeareth in them. *Isay. 1. 19. If yee consent and obey, yee shall ease the good things of the Land, that is,* if yee will consent to take *Iehovah* for your Lord and King, if you give consent, there is the first thing. But that is not enough; but if you also

How this  
faculty is  
weakened.

4  
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To know if  
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ction.

Rom. 2.

Isay. 1. 19

obey, the consent that standeth in the inward act of the mind, the truth of it will bee seene in your obedience; in the acts of your lives, if you consent and obey *You shall eate the good things of the land*, that is, you shall take of all that he hath, that is good and convenient for you, for then you are married to him in truth, and have an interest in all his goods. The Lord would have sacrifice exactly performed; but the Prophets make light of that, in comparison of obedience, and the complaint of the Lord is of your disobedience, you are a disobedient and rebellious people, *Your necke is like an iron sinew*, you plucke away the shoulder, and will not obey. It is not a sacrifice which was a typicall taking of Christ, but obedience must goe with it: so in the new Testament, the two maine things the Apostles beate upon, were Faith and new obedience, fruits worthy of amendment of life, *Acts*, 20. 21. The Apostle summes all his preaching in these two things, repentance towards God, and Faith towards Iesus Christ, and he joynes them together, because they are never severed. That was his businesse, if you should have heard him conferre or preach, you should have heard him beate upon these two, Faith and obedience, or subjection to the commandements. So it was the scope of *Iohn Baptist*, he preacht the baptisme of repentance, and the washing away of sinnes, now they would be ready to take the sweet, therefore he tells them they must be obedient, and he urgeth it on particulars, as they that are soulers must offer no wrong to any, and so of the rest

Faith and  
obedience  
goe toge-  
ther.  
*AR. 20. 21*

rest; the Lord will not take any thing of an enemy, a stranger, 2 Cor. 8. 12. *Hee that giveth almes, and giveth not his person first to the Lord, the Lord accepteth it not,* but yet on the other side, workes must justifie our faith: it is but an empty faith, except it hath an actuall reall obedience accompanying it. It is a dangerous rocke to thinke our sins are forgiven, and we have accepted Christ, and have good meanings, and yet we have no obedience accompanying this: hee that is in Christ hath crucified the flesh, and walketh after the spirit, and he that is in Christ, is subject unto him in all things. *Aristotle* saith, not he that had a strong body, but he that runne well, had the crowne in the *Olympian* games, it was not an athlericall ability, but he that wrestled best: and it is the similitude the Apostle himselfe alludes to, and takes up, 1 Cor. 9. towards the end, Exhorting to strictnesse of obedience unto Christ, as without which a man will loose his labour. It is well expressed in the parable of the sonnes, one said he would goe into the vineyard, there were good intentions; the other said he would not: he that said he would, and went not, went besides the reward; and hee that said he would not, but went, it was hee that received the reward. It is not good desires, but actuall performing of obedience that shall provide a Crowne for you. And good reason why tryall should be taken by this, for tryall is in difficult things. To professe and know much, are easie; but to bring your affections into subjection, to wrestle with lusts, to crosse your wils, and your selves,

1 Cor. 8. 12

1 Cor. 9.

Tryall is  
from obe-  
dience.

It is the end  
of preach-  
ing.

The end of  
every grace.

upon every occasion, this is hard. The Lord looketh that in our lives wee should bee serviceable to him; and usefull to men; that which is within, the Lord and our brethren are never the better for it; but the outward obedience flowing thence, glorifies God, and doth good to man. The Lord will have this done. What else is the end of our preaching, our planting, and watering, but that the trees may be filled with sap? And what is the end of that sap, but that the tree may bring forth fruit? what careth the husband-man for leaves or barren trees? not onely the thornes, are cast into fire, but barren trees. Therefore looke to your fruits, and deceive not your selves. It is a common error for men to thinke their estates good, when in the meane time they walke after the stubbornesse of their hearts: they that doe the will of the Lord shall be saved. What is the end of every grace, but to mollifie the heart, and make it plyable to some commandment or other? Looke how many commandements, so many graces there are in vertue and efficacy, although not so many severall names are given them. The end of every such grace is to make us obedient; as the end of temperance is chastity; to bow the heart to those commands, *be ye sober, &c. not in chambering and wantonnesse, &c.* When the Lord commandeth us not to be angry with our brother, the end of meekenesse, and why the Lord insulseth it, is to keepe us from unadvised, rash anger, so saith the end of it, is to take Christ Iesus, to make us obedient

dient to the command of the Gospell, which commands us to beleeeve in him; so as all graces doe joyne together, but to frame and fashion the soule to obedience. Then so much obedience as is in your lives, so much grace in your hearts, and no more: therefore aske your hearts, how subject you are to the Lord in your lives; it was the counsell that *Francis Spira* gave to them about him, saith he, *Learn all of mee, to take heed of severing faith and obedience*; I taught justification by faith, but neglected obedience, and therefore is this befallen me. I have knowne some godly men whose comfort on their death beds, hath beene not from the inward acts of their mind, which apart considered, might be subject to misapprehensions, but from the course of obedience in their lives issuing thence. Let Christians looke to it, that in all their conversation, as they stand in every relation, as Schollers, trades-men, husbands, wives, looke to this, that when they come to dye, they have beene subject in all things: this will afford solid comfort. What will you say, when Satan chargeth you with this? it is true you have large promises, and *hee that beleeveth shall be saved*, but then you must have beene obedient and bring forth fruits; and when you looke upon your lives, and finde not these fruits, where are you? But you will say then, there is none but may doubt himselfe, for who can say his obedience is perfect? I answer, it is not so much the perfection, as the sincerity that is required. But how shall we know that, you will say?

So much  
obedience  
so much  
grace.

*Spira.*

Comfort  
from obedi-  
ence.

*Quest.*

Tryall of  
sincerity.

I

Looking  
to every  
command.

First consider, whether thou be obedient in every thing. This is in the words of the Text, therefore I mention it first, he that hath taken Christ, there is never a commandement, but hee is subject to it: though hee faile in the performance of the commandements, yet never an one but hee is subject to; as for example, the Lord hath commanded *to sanctifie the Sabbath, not to forsake the fellowship of the Saints; to pray continually; to take heed how wee heare; to wash our hearts from evill thoughts and lusts.* When an obedient heart, one that hath taken Christ truely, heares these commands, he is obedient to every one of them, hee goeth about the businesse, as an obedient servant about his masters service; though he may be overtaken with negligence and some contrary passion, yet he goeth about it. I meane, he doth it as well as hee is able. Another will not set himselfe to doe the businesse, but is readie to expostulate the matter with God, and say, The commandement is too strict, or else hee refuseth by plaine stubbornnesse. As for example, that commandement, *Take heed how you heare*, that is, let not one instruction fall to the ground, see that you work it upon your hearts; a disobedient heart goeth not about this, hee lendeth his eares for an houre; but when the Sermon is done, there is an end: so that other, *to pray continually*; it may be he prayeth not alone, nor with his Family, or if both, yet in a sleight and negligent manner, as good never a whit, as never the better: so also, *let your communication be alwayes gracious*; such an one thinkes it a needlesse thing

thing to bee so strict and indiscreet, he is not, nor will not be subject: this is disobedience. Marke the generality, and thinke it no more then needs, when the Scripture there saith, *We must be subject to him in every thing*; that is, not onely to the maine commandement, but to every part of it: he that hath said, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*, hath said, *Thou shalt not have an adulterous heart, or eye, or thought, or dalliance*. Now if thou be subject to the maine, if thou neglect the smallest as thou countest them; thou art disobedient, and thou art one to whom God will *render vengeance*, 2 The. 1. 7. For it is to them that know not the Lord, or that will not obey him, though they know that he will doe this unto them, ver. 8. and I aske you if you know not, that there is such a commandement as this, *Redeeme the time*, &c. where is thy obedience to it, thou that triflest away thy precious time, and makest no conscience of it? If the Lord hath said, *He that doth his worke negligently, shall be cursed*, what shalt thou be, that dost it not at all? Students that loose their time, and will not be obedient to that command, hath not the Lord commanded you hereto be subject in all things? so he hath said, *For sake not the fellowship of the Saints*, that is, the element you should live in; and it is not enough onely to abstaine from evill company, but to frequent good: so for your speeches being gracious alwayes: are not these commandements of the Lord? where is thy obedience therein, when thy company is idle, thy speeches vaine? Likewise, *pray continually*, that is, at least twise a day,

2 The. 1. 7.



What sub-  
jection is  
meant.

a day; it must be frequent and fervent too: when no paines is taken heerein, it is a signe you are disobedient. Thus you may examine your selves by other commandements, and pitch upon that which you are most ready to faile in. Now when I urge this as a necessary concomitant of grace, the meaning is not, that it is a *perfect* subjection in every thing, but such, that a man doth goe about it with all his soule, and make it his worke. A Mans heart may bee a Temple for the Holy Ghost, yet evill thoughts and lusts may passe through, but there is not a table set up there for them; sinne hath not quiet possession in them, they set up no idoll of riches, or pleasure, though they may bee overtaken and faile in giving due respect to these commands, yet they drawe not out, they spinne not the thread of any sinne thoroughout the course of their lives. Whatever it be, if a man lye in it from day to day, it is disobedience. And your purposes must bee resolute, the divorce must bee full without any secret lingsings after the lust forsaken, though by an accident you may bee overtaken by it, yet this is your resolution, there is sinceritie scene, another giveth them over but for necessitie, with a moneths minde to returne to them againe: as *Phaltiel*, that when the King sent for his wife, sent her, because there was a necessity of it, but yet *went weeping after her*, 2 Sam. 3, 16. so it is with us, wee let goe our sinnes, but goe weeping after them: the heart is not cleare of them. And consider well the ground of it, why it must bee in every thing.

in

2 Sam. 3, 16

Why uni-  
versall obe-  
dience is  
required.

in thoughts and words, and why disobedience in the smallest commandment, is in idle words, not endeavouring to keep your heart cleane, your affections pure, doth thus put a man out of the state of grace; and that such have not taken Christ, is because all the commandments are equally commanded; and though they fall upon differing objects and so are different, in respect of the Commanders will; and therefore by the same reason, a disobedience to the smallest, is a disobedience, as well as to the greatest. Now the threatnings are against disobedient persons, because every disobedient person casteth away the Lord, as *Saul* did, that is, he refuseth to have him his governor. Now he that doth so, cannot be saved: for he hath not taken Christ for his Head and Husband; *Whoever shall keepe the whole Law, and yet faileth in one point, he is guilty of all*, that is, it is a disobedience to the Commander, in what commandment soever it be, though but in one thing, thou hast refused the Law-giver, and art a rebell against him: standing out against any one thing, makes a rebell against a Prince, if he stubbornly refuse to obey in one thing, as well as in a thousand.

A second rule to trye our sincerity of subjection is to consider the manner of it. Consider whether you be subject, as the wife is to her husband, which is the maine thing intimated in this subjection here: there is a great difference betweene being subject in the outward man out of necessity, and to obey from the heart the forme of doctrine, &c. It is one thing to be subject as a servant,  
another

*Iam. 2. 10.*

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another thing to be subject as a wife, who is subject, not of coercion or necessity, but freely and willingly out of love, because she would not grieve her husband, the Saints delight lyes in communion with God, so as their hearts are not at rest, when they stand not in good tearmes with him; they cannot let any uneven reckonings to lye betweene him and them; they love him, and therefore dare not disobey him. And this ariseth from a perswasion, what ever he commandeth or inflicteth it is good, and just, and equall: then he willingly obeyes and suffers. Thus the obedience of Christ, you shall see what kind of one it was, *Shall I not drink the cup which my Father hath given me?* that is, I would not drinke this bitter cup, not only because of necessity I must, but seeing my Fathers will is I should drinke it, and hee hath prepared it for me, I will drinke it. Hence many a woman will say, shall I not doe that which my husband would have me to doe? he is wise and loves me, and he hath reason for what he commands: others of the Sex, have yielded obedience thus unto the Lord, as *Esther*, when newes was brought to him that all his house should bee cut off; saith he, *It is the Lord, let him do as seemeth good in his eyes*; it is the Lord that loveth me, taketh care of mee, let him doe what pleaseth him, I am content, and willing to subject my selfe. Another may be subject to his commandments; but it is of necessity; on the contrary, the Saints who love and prize communion with him, and would not loose it; would have no interruption.

So

So shall we receive good of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil? As if hee should have said; Surely the Lord would not have done me so much good as already I have received from Him, if His purpose had not bene good towards mee; and therefore, if some evil by his providence doe befall me, should I not be more inquisitively? If it had bene from an enemy, hee would have bene discontent, but coming from the hand of a friend, he was willing with it. Indeed, holy men may be sometimes in a mist, and not consider the reason of the Lords Counsells, as *Paul*, when he was possessed by the messenger of *Satan*; hee was somewhat discontent, till the Lord made knowne to him, that hee was mistaken in it, that though hee tooke it for poison, yet it was medicine, hee thought it came from *Satan*; but when hee saw it came from one that loved him, and it was for his good; that the grace of God and his power might appeare, he willingly submitted, yea, hee joyced in it. A good Conscience is not onely to doe that which is commanded; it is possible for him that hath no grace, not to dare to doe somethings which are evil in secret; but a good conscience is, when a man is not willing to displease the Lord, he dares, hee doe it, because hee loveth the Lord. Hee stands upon such terms with him, as a chaste wife with her Husband. Therefore hee will looke to make his conscience even, and to please the Lord in all things. The third rule to say it by. Consider whether thy objection be, as to the Lord, or no, for his sake.

1st. 2. 10,

3. 10.

As to the Lord,

3

As to the Lord,

or. 2. 11

*like*: as here it is sayd; *as the Church is subject to Christ*. Many thinke their obedience to the commandments is to the Lord; when they are deceived: It was *Sauls* case, it was a faire pretence to spare the cattell, for Sacrifice for the Lord: But it was but a pretence; for it was for himselfe indeed, that he spared them. So *Balaam* spake faire, when hee sayd, he would speake nothing but what the Lord should say to him; and that hee would not curse the people of *Israel*, except God bad him curse them; but it was not for any love to God; but he had an eye to himselfe and his owne honour, hee knew it was in vaine to curse where God did blesse, and so he thought thus with himselfe, if hee should curse them without the command of the Lord, hee should but discredit himselfe, and loose his labour, wages and all; for his curse would take no effect: therefore hee would not goe till God commanded him to goe. Likewise it may be, hee desired to *escape the death of his righteousness*, for as all was out of selfe love. Likewise *Amaziah* was subject to the Lord, walking in all the wayes of *David*; but all was done to other ends then *David* did. But you will say, it is hard to discern, when a man doth obey the commandment, whether it be to the Lord or no: how therefore shall we know it?

Quest.

Ans.  
When our  
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Consider after any falling in thy obedience, or commission of any sinne, what it is that troubleth thee, the offence against God, or the harme, discredit, &c. redounding unto thy selfe? You shall see the falseness of *Sauls* heart in this

this, the disobedience of the Lord never troubled him, though he seemed a while affected with offending the Lord, but hee after shewed that it was only the losse of his credit which he was tender of; for when *Samuel* would have left him, and hee thought some dishonour would redound to him, that was it that troubled him; hee desires not so much that God would pardon, as that *Samuel* would honour him; come sayes he with me, and let us goe and offer Sacrifice, *honour me before the people*. It was not his sinne and disobedience, but the losse of his credit that hee stood upon. The contrary you may see in *David*, see his carriage under the guilt of his murder and adultery, for which he was so greatly afflicted: but how much did he slight all other things? his affliction he did beare well enough, when his owne sonne had abused his wives; this did not perplex him, it was his sin troubled him, as appeares by that *Psalm* he made upon that occasion, in which you have not a word of his affliction, but his sin; it was that hee was tender of. Find out therefore where thy tendernes for sin is; as a Smith, when he would trie the hoof of an horse, look where it shrinketh, that is the tender part, so see what shrinketh and galleth thy heart most; if it be sinne and offending the Lord, it is a signe thy eye was upon the Lord: but when thou art tender of losses, and crosses, and discredit to thy selfe, it is an ill signe, shewing thou respectest thy selfe. *David* taxeth himselfe in those things which were counted no sinne by men, but an honour; as the cutting off *Sauls* lap



of his garment; it was an honour to him to come so neare his adversary, and but cut off the lap of his garment. So in numbering the people, it was no outward shame or evill, but the sinne that troubled him, Lord, sayes he, *strike me, for these sheepe, what have they done?*

4 Rule.

A fourth rule whereby thou maist try thy subjection to the Lord, is by thy disobedience to all others; it is a rule may seeme somewhat remote at the first hearing, but it is such a rule of trying subjection, that I find in the Scripture, St. Paul when he would expresse his subjection, he doth it by way of opposition. *If I should yet please men, I were not the servant of Christ*; it is a good argument of our being subject to the Lord, when we care not for displeasing others, *Rom. 2. 8.* as not obeying the truth, is joyned with obeying unrighteousnesse, so as the contrary, obeying the truth is alwayes joyned with disobeying, all unrighteousnesse, *1am. 4. 7.* they are put together. *Submit your selves to the Lord, and resist the Devill.* He that is most subject to the Lord, is a most untractable man to man, and to all creatures else, upon every occasion, because the common course of the world is contrary to holinesse, *Ephes. 2. 1.* which causeth others to quarrell so much with them as they doe; and this ariseth from their obedience to the Lord. It is common amongst us, when wee see a man easie, plyable, tractable, ready to give satisfaction and content to men; to commend him for it, as a good disposition in them; but to be so in all things, even in sinning against



against God, this though it is pleasing to men, it is abominable to God; it is an evident case, that they which would not doe a thing, if left to themselves, because unlawfull, yet to give satisfaction to friends, to their company, as *Herod* did, they will, that is a signe of disobedience; the more waxy the heart is to men, the more hard to the Lord. It is a signe of pusillanimity in Christians that yeeld so much to men, they forget themselves; there is a certaine magnanimity which Christians should maintaine: wee are Kings, the Sonnes of God, therefore what is the countenance or discountenance of man? wee should cary our selves as greater men than they, wee should learne *regnum gerere in pectore*, to cary a kingdome in our brests. It is a common saying among men, such a man understands himselfe well, that is, he understandeth his place, his dignity, and caryeth himselfe according to it. In this we are ready to goe too farre, but we should learne to doe thus in our obedience to God. The truth of a wifes chastity is seene in the peremptory denyall of all that sollicite her; the more peremptory wee are in such denyals of the creatures, the more subject we are to the Lord.

Lastly, you shall try it by this, consider what you doe in those things that above all others you would not be subject in, single out that sinne that is dearest to thee; though a man would be obedient in all else, yet in some things to be restrained it goes to his heart, something is more peculiar, and is that he fancies, and it goeth more neare un-

5 Rule

to him to obey in that, then in any other thing. When the Lord would trie *Abraham*, he tries him in that which he was most unwilling to part with. Now, sayes hee, *I know that thou fearest mee*, for I have tried thee in that which I know thou lovedst dearly, and yet thou art content to part with it for my sake. Make the same question to you: look what it is, that above all others you would not be subject in, whether it be a matter of credit, of estate, or a lust that sitteth close, if thou wilt try whether thou be subject, so if for his sake thou canst obey the commandement, which is against it that crosseth it, for such a command the Lord gaveto *Abraham*; and hee did obey it: hee that taketh Christ, taketh him for a Lord and a Saviour.

*Quest.*

But you will say, these rules are good, but I finde my selfe wanting, I would be subject, but I cannot bring my heart unto them, what meanes should I use for the doing of this?

*Ans.*  
Helps to  
this duty.

For this I will give some helpes: for the end of these rules of tryall, is not so much to shut men out, or discourage them, but the end is, that finding themselves wanting, they may be stirred up the more to be diligent in the prosecution of the meanes, and so grow up to perfection.

The meanes to be used are these.

First, be diligent in observing where thy heart is not subject. Diligent observance of the flesh in us that is ready to rebell, when we take least notice of it; this is the first meanes. There is no worke we goe about, but the flesh hath an hand in it.

I  
To observe  
the rebellion  
of the flesh.

it. There is some commotion and rebellion goes along with the best worke we doe, now to see this is a great helpe to obedience. Wee are not so much overcome by it, as by our owne inobsequancy. The flesh is an enemy, and *nihil in hoste despicendum*, sleight nothing of an enemies that may hurt thee, take heed the flesh deceive thee not, it is an enemy: suspect thine owne heart upon every occasion; for it is ready to deceive thee; especially in things that are lawful, there thou must have a diligent eye, that there bee no rebellion, that thou goe not beyond thy bounds.

Secondly, labour to have thy heart and reason convinced and perswaded that it is best for thee to be subject to the Lord: the Lord ruleth no where as a King, but where he rules first as a Prophet, that is, except he first perswade the heart by an inward enlightening, that it is best for the heart to be subject, the will and the affections will never yeeld. Therefore if there be any commandement wherein thou findest a difficulty, arme thy selfe with reasons out of Scripture, get those weapons the Apostle speakes of; *1 Cor. 10. The weapons of our warfare are not carnall, but mighty through God, bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*, that is, seeke out the reasons the Scripture giveth against such a sinne, and for to perswade the heart to obedience; for spirituall reasons only will work, and are mighty, morall reasons and arguments from respects to thy selfe, for feare of Hell, and for desire of Heaven, and the like, they may restrain the outward man, but they cannot

2.

To be convinced of the convinces of it.

1 Cor. 10.

bring the inward man into a full subjection: but spirituall reasons will make thee subject, and to obey from the heart; and yet this is not enough, they must be mighty through God: the Lord must have the setting them on, they must be brought home and applyed by him. One may have many good reasons to move him to be subject to such a commandement, but except they be brought home to the conscience, by the Lord, they doe no good: therefore saith the Apostle, they are mighty through God to bring downe the strongs holds, and false reasonings in the understanding, for they are these strong holds: where ever disobedience is, it ariseth from some lust, and wheron is this lust grounded, but upon some false conceit, and reasoning in the understanding? Now these spirituall reasons doe dissolve them: and when you see the vanity of the conceit, the lust vanisheth, when thou seest thy error, the lust will bee gone, and then the mind obeyeth easily. It then runneth in the wayes of Gods commandements, as a wheele that is well oyled. First then you must observe narrowly, and strive to discerne betweene the flesh and spirit, which are as close as the bones and marrow, as the inwardest parts, they are so mixed together, there is such a conjunction betweene the flesh and spirit in every action, as is betweene the marrow and bones, but you must labour to discerne betweene them, and that is the use you must make of all the knowledge you get by the Word of God. And then secondly, thou must have a speciall care, and still labour with thy mind, reason,

son, and understanding, to be perswaded that it is best to be obedient.

And then the third and last thing is, to do somewhat with the affections; that is, to exercise and accustomethy stubborn affections to obey; the continuance in doing good, doth subject the affections; for as the Apostle speakes, *Hebr. 5. 14.* of some, *That by reason of use have their wits exercised to discern good from evil*, that is, men being occupied in spirituall reasons, and truths, holy conferences, &c. they are able to discern truths. So it is in the affections; for, as exercise in these things makes the understanding ready to discern, so exercise makes the will and affections as ready to be subject, for it hath the same force in one part of the soule, that it hath in another: therefore the Lord leadeth us into variety of conditions; to exercise such and such graces, that we may be subject to him in all things, for the image of God serveth but to bring the soule into obedience to God, as it did in *Adam* in Paradise. Now therefore, God leads us into another place, and state, and condition of life, that such a grace may be exercised in us. As the Apostle saith, *James, 1. 2.* *Be glad when you fall into many temptations.* Sometimes he bringeth sicknesse, sometimes disgrace, sometimes poverty, sometimes affliction in children, wives, or one thing or other upon us, and all this to exercise our graces. And what is the end of this exercise, but to bow the heart to subjection, that we may be ready to obey him in all things? Now if thou wouldest exercise thy selfe

3.

Labour on bring the affections to obey.

*Heb. 5. 14.*

*James 1. 2.*

*James 1. 2.*

*James 1. 2.*

*James 1. 2.*

in this manner, consider wherein thou art ready to disobey, and say: I see I want such a grace; and am ready to disobey in such a particular, I will resolve to practise the contrary. As if a man bee subject to anger, and want meeknesse, say, well, I see I am too much subject to anger. Therefore I will set upon the exercising of this grace of gentlenesse, and meeknesse, I will not be angry with the meekest of my servants. Thus if wee would doe, it would save us much affliction, which otherwise the Lord is forced to bring on us for this, to make us subject to him.

*object.*

But you will say, it is grace that doth it: how can this custome that is but the act of a man doe it then?

*Ans.*

Heb. 12, 12, 13.

It is true, it is grace that doth it, but yet it is the exercise of that grace that doth it too. Heb. 5, 11, 12, 13. And that, as it increaseth and enlargeth grace, and mended those habits which wee have, and makes them stronger: it is indeed those infused qualities of grace planted in the faculties of the soule that bring it in subjection: and this custome doth but stirre up and encrease, and intends them; but yet this exercise where graces are first wrought, will encrease them and make them strong, through the assistance of Christ accompanying it. Thou shalt find this exercise will make thee strong in grace: the joynts of the body bent to such a course, and often employed in it, doe get an habit. So it is with the Soule. Other yokes the more they are borne, the more they weaken, but the more you beare the Yoke of

Christ,



Christ, either in doing or suffering, the more able you are to doe it.

And the use that we may make of this is, that we should be from hence stirred up to consider that great privilege we have from Christ, for if he be a head to us, hee is our guide, whoe is so an head to us, as an husband is to his wife. Now the husband is the guide of his wife, and so Christ is our guide. When a woman is young and not able to guide her selfe, she had need have a guide: such is the case of every man naturally: but Christ, when a man is in him, becomes a guide unto him, or as the Head guideth the strength of the members, so doth the Lord all that belong to him. This is a privilege not thought of among us. When we think of the other privileges, this of the guidance of Christ is forgotten of us. Therefore I will stand upon this great benefit, which all have that are ingrafted into Christ: now he guides them in all their wayes.

First, by enlightening them, so as when others are in darkness, they have their eyes in their head, and see the way before them, when as all others are blind, and want either light, or else eyes to see withall.

Again, he sends his spirit to bee a remembrance to them in ambiguous and difficult cases, to shew them the way they are to take, and hee brings some prevalent arguments and reasons to mind, to move us to doe this or that, which would otherwise have bin forgotten; and to shew us the inconveniences that will follow of doing this or that.

V/cz.

To shew  
our privi-  
ledge by  
Christ as a  
head.

†

How Christ  
guides us.

I.

2



that which would otherwise have been hid from us.

He shineth by our consciences, which are appointed to be the immediate guide of us, and the Lords deputy, whereas otherwise they would either be still, or guide amisse.

By taking from us wrong guides, false opinions, strong, unruly, and inordinate affections, and instead of them he puts a right guide into our hearts, rectifies our judgements, puts in holy affections, which are the rudder of the soule, that turne in this way and that way. Thus there is a secret guidance, though we know it not, that the Saints have from the Lord in all their wayes. This is a great priviledge: for when a man is *inoppransibilis*, in a strait and exigent, and knowes not which way to goe, when if hee should take the wrong way, it might be his undoing, then to have a guide, what a great priviledge is it? When David was in Keilah, and heard that Saul would come downe thither, 1 Sam. 23. hee knew not what to doe, whether to goe or stay, then the Lord guided him. So Abraham his servant, when he went for a wife, for his Masters son, he knew not which way to goe for a wife for him, nor whom to take, then did God send his Angell to guide him, as Abraham had foretold him before hee went, hee told him *The Angell of the Lord should goe before him*. The want of this you may see in Rehoboam, who was in a great strait, when he asked counsell of the young men, but the Lord would not guide him, and therefore he did that which was his ruine. So

*Absolon*

*Absolon* when he was in *betwixt*, not knowing which of the counsels given him to take, the Lord would not guide him; having a purpose to destroy him. So it is with us; there are often cases fall out wherein guidance is requisite, as in the changing our estate by marriage, place of living, the choyse of our callings, wherein to be guided or misguided, is our making or undoing. There is no day, when in wee have no need of his guidance; In regard of one occasion or other: now to have this privilege to goe to the Lord freely; and aske counsell of him, and to be sure to have a ready answer from him, is a great priviledge. *David* in all his straits went to the Lord to aske counsell; and the Lord gave him counsell: *Saul* went, and the Lord would not answer him by *Vision* or *Thumming*, nor dreames, nor any way. ¶ The case of all that are in Christ, is like the case of *David*; if they goe to him, the Lord hath bound himselfe to answer them; for they have some interest in the wisdom of Christ. But the case of the other, is like the case of *Saul*; he sends them away without, because they are strangers to him; and therefore he is not bound to answer them. And that you have such an interest, consider, *1 Corinth. 1. 30.* But you are of him in Christ Iesus, who is made unto us wisdom, that is, God the Father hath given him to us to teach us; to make us wise, to guide and direct us in difficult cases; when we cannot instruct our selves. The like to this is that, *Isay. 9. 16.* Unto us a child is borne &c. But what are the benefits wee shall have by that child: First he shall doe miracles, wonderfull

22. 2. 3. 4.

1 Cor. 1. 30.

Isay. 9. 16.

full things among you, for *his name is wonderful.*  
 Secondly, hee undoubtedly shall bee your *Coun-*  
*sellor* y<sup>e</sup> that is, I have given him to you, that when  
 you want counsell and direction, you may goe to  
 him, for I have given him to you, for that end.  
 This we may as truly expect of him, as the Jewes  
 did of the *Messiah*, as appears by that speech,  
*Ioh. 4. 25. I know well that when the Messiah is come,*  
*he will tell us all things.* This was the common opi-  
 nion of the people: the Jewes did expect this from  
 him, so may wee: and therefore upon any exigent  
 goe thou and say, Lord, thou hast given me thy  
 Sonne, and him to be wisdom to mee, and ap-  
 pointed him to be my counsellor, and I have need  
 of counsell and direction, and therefore Lord  
 give me an answer, and direction. If wee would  
 presse him thus, he could not deny us. Besides,  
 in that Christ hath made himselfe our head, it is  
 his office, hee hath undertaken it, it belongeth to  
 him, to guide his Church and every member  
 of it, and can hee faile in that belongeth to  
 him? That which sets the price on this priviledge;  
 is the need which we have of it, none being able  
 to guide himselfe. The principle of guidance is  
 resident in the head, and is communicated to the  
 members but upon occasion. As it is thus in the  
 naturall body, so that faculty of directing us is  
 in Christ, and is communicated to us but upon  
 occasion, as wee need it: hence every man wal-  
 keth so wisely upon every occasion as God will  
 guide and direct him to doe, in such a time, and

in such circumstances; therefore wise men, we see are sometimes insatuated, take a foolish course, that a stander by, who is farre inferiour to them, sees plainly this to be an unwise course, this the Lord doth, that they may know, *the Lord is onely wife*, as 1 Tim. 1. Which consider, and it will bee a great helpe to make us prize this priviledge. Where is any man but is too well conceited of his owne wisdom? but to thinke God is onely wife, and that himselfe hath not a beame, nor a sparke of wisdom, it is hard to perswade a man of this, but it is evident the Lord is onely wife.

1 Tim. 1.  
God only  
wife.

For first, none can give counsel, except he knoweth the whole compasse of a businesse, hee that knoweth but part is not fit to give counsell: they that looke but upon few things, but upon a corner of a businesse, and not round about it, are apt to mistake: now who knoweth a businesse thus, but the Lord above? our knowledge even in practicall matters, in our owne businesse, is but in part, as well as in things heavenly.

Besides, Secondly our consolations depend commonly on these two things, first, the knowledge of the secrets of mens hearts, with whom we have to doe. Secondly, of the future contingent events, which are to come, and to know neither is in our power, but it is the Lord onely that knoweth the secrets of these mens hearts, with whom we have to doe, as also the contingent things that are to come.

When the Lord would have *David* goe out of  
*Keilah*

1 Sam. 23.  
11, 13.

Keilah, saith David, will the Lords of Keilah deliver me up? David knew not their hearts, nor no man knew, but the Lord onely knew they would deliver him up into the hands of Saul, 1 Sam. 23. 11. 12. and he told him, they would doe it. And againe, he asked whether Saul would come downe to Keilah, it was *futurum contingens*, a contingent thing, and no man could tell whether he would or not; but the Lord told, that *hee would come downe to destroy Keilah*; if any other had knowne these two things, he might have counsell'd David. Now our guidance then in such things dependeth upon the knowledge of those two things, which yet are not in our power to know, but onely in the power of God, and therefore wee are not able to guide our selves. It is said, Col. 2. 3. *That in him are hid all the treasures of Wisdome and Knowledge*; And they are so in Him, that they are not out of Him.

Object.

Ans<sup>r</sup>.

Naturall  
wisdome  
from Christ.

But men have naturall wisdome you will say. It is true, but they have it from Christ, All the light that ever was in the world, even in those which knew not Christ, it came all from him. As Job. 1. 5. *The light shined in darknesse*, that is, in the darke places of the world, and not onely in Goshen, even since the beginning of the world, and the darknesse comprehended it not, and in that sense it is he who enlighteneth every man that comes into the World. But put the case you could find our right counsells, or you had a man like Achitopel, whose counsell was as the Oracles of God, and who were able to direct you, yet to take this counsell is not in

in your owne power, it must be given you. That which *Salomon* saith of the foole, *He hath a price in his hand, but he hath no heart*, may be said of good counsell, there is oftentimes a price put into our hands, as was into *Abolon's*, and *Rehoboam's* hands, but we are not able of our selves to take it: therefore saith the Apostle to *Timothy*, *2 Tim. 2. 7.* having counselled him what to doe, *Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.* As if he should say, I have given thee good counsell: but there must be another counsellor, therefore I beseech the Lord to give thee understanding, to open thine eyes, to see the rectitude of this counsell, and enable thee to apply it, and take it. *Nemo per se sapit*, no man by himselfe is able to counsell himselfe, there must be both a secret light, and eyes within to direct us. Many times wee refuse the best, and pitch upon the worst, *Ier. 10. 23.* *The way of man is not in himselfe; it is not in man to direct his wayes*, as if he had said, it is true, for the most part, men pitch wel enough upon the journies end, and aime at happinesse; but how to direct their steps, and to attaine that end, it is not in them, therefore Lord I beseech thee (sayes he) to guide us and direct us for the best. It is every mans case, his wayes are not in his owne power, hee is not able to see what is best and worst, and to chooseth the right way, and if hee could in the generall, yet we had need of continuall guidance in the severall particular passages of our lives. We are at a stand at every turning we come at, and like a man in a wildernesse know not which way to goe; except

2 Tim. 2. 7

wee



Dan. 5. 23.

wee have a guide at every step, *Dan. 5. 23. Hee is the God in whose hand thy breath is, and all thy wayes &c, this is a thing we doe not consider.* Wee thinke indeed our lives are in Gods hand, and that matters of greater moment, are of his disposing; but that every step we take should depend on him, this is that we consider not of, a man takes not a step either into good or evill, into prosperity or adversity, but the Lord guideth that step. Therefore consider your great priviledges, who have the Lord for your head, your guide, and your counsellor, and as you must know this priviledge, so you must make use of it, for al those our priviledges we have in Christ, were not declared that you should gaze upon them onely, know them, and no more: therefore goe to the Lord for counsell, wisdom and direction upon all occasions.

Quest.

Ans.

How to get  
wisdom  
from God.

Iam. 1. 5.

I  
See the  
want of it

1 Cor. 3. 18.

Psal. 25. 9.

You will say, but how shall we doe to obtaine it? For this I will give you these rules.

First, thou must acknowledge thine owne inability, that thou art not able to guide thy selfe. *Iames, 1. 5. If any lack wisdom, let him aske, &c.* his meaning there, is not so much to shew that some men want wisdom, others not, but the meaning is, till a man sees he wants it, hee is not fit to aske it, neither will the Lord be ready to give it. *1 Corin. 3. 18. Hee that is wise, must become a foole to be wise.* It is true also here, *thou must cease from shine owne wisdom,* thou must confesse thou art not able to guide thy selfe, and that therefore because thou wantest wisdom, thou askest it of him. *Psal. 25. 9. Hee will teach the humble his way, and guide*



guide the macke in judgement, that is, those that see their owne emprinse, how unable they are to guide themselves, such He is ready to teach in the way they should choose.

Secondly, thou must also aske it of the Lord. You may read how God used *David* to this course from time to time, and put him oft to a stand when he fled from *Saul*, purposely that he might bee accustomed to aske counsell of the Lord upon all occasions. Therefore let us learne so to doe, in any hard case, when we know not which way to turne us, to goe to the Lord, and say, Thou art my Husband, my Head, my Father and whither should the Children goe for counsell, but unto their Fathers? and the Wife, but unto her Husband? Now Lord counsell mee and direct mee what to doe in this case. If you doe thus, will the Lord deny you? no, why saith he, you, *if your Children aske you bread, will you give them a stone? If they aske fish, will you give them a serpent?* So I say to you, if you aske him counsell, will he give you poyson? vwill he turne you into a wrong way and misguide you when you aske the right? No.

Thirdly, you must aske in faith, that is added in *S. Iames*, 1. 6. So as to rest and rely upon him. Thus hee commanded his Disciples, that when they should be brought before Councells and rulers of the Synagogues, they should take no thought what to say, what was the reason but this, I will have you rest upon me, for guidance and assistance: at that time I will suggest to you what soever is needfull upon such an occasion.

2  
Begit of  
Ops.

3  
Aske in  
faith.  
Iam. 1. 6.

Now though that was extraordinary, yet it holds thus farre in ordinary times and cases, that though you may use the best meanes you can, and take the best consultations, yet so as still to trust more to your prayers, and on God for wisdom and direction, then to your owne consultations, and the meanes which you have used, say as *Ishobab* did, although we use meanes, yet *our eyes are toward thee*, so it is a prevalent argument which *Asa* used to the Lord, *2 Chron. 14. 11.* Lord (saith hee) it is nothing *wish thee to help with many, or with no power, helpe us O Lord our God*, for we rest on thee, and *in thy name are wee come against this great multitude*. As if hee should say, I have provided an army, made all things ready, but I rest upon thee for helpe; therefore the Lord was present with him, gave him the victory: so wee should goe to the Lord and say, we have used the counsell of our best friends, and the best meanes we can, but yet *our eyes are towards thee*, and wee rest on thee for direction in this case. If a man thus resteth upon God, hee may say, if I bee deceived, the Lord deceiveth me. If thou trustest not to the Lord, hee may faile thee, for hee is not bound to direct and to guide thee: it fareth with us, as with those that came to aske questions of our Saviour, curious ones, the Lord sent them away without an answer, kept himselfe reserved: so if wee come to aske, not with resolution to rest upon the Lord, and in confidence he will direct us, wee shall goe without: *Isay. 7.* The Lord hath promised deliverance to *Ahaz*, yet tels him, if you will

not

not

not beleewe, you shall not bee establish-  
ed.

Fourthly, there must bee a care to please him; a constant course of obedience, else wee doe not trust in him: hee that saith hee trusteth to the Lord, and doth not obey him, doth but dissem- ble with him, and so the Lord accounts it no bet- ter than dissembling with him, as *Job 42. 10*. Cary thy selfe so, that the Lord may rejoyce o- ver thee, to doe thee good, and to guide thee in all exigents. And if thou wilt take his counsell in heavenly things, thou shalt not want in earth- ly things, *Prov. 4. 6. For sake her not (that is) Wis- dome* and shee shall keepe thee; love her, and she shall preserve thee; that is, if a man will preserve the uprightness of his heart in his wayes, at hee will walke by the rule that God hath appointed him; then wisdom shall preserve him, that is, Christ shall guide him in all his wayes.

Now there is a double guidance, one in a mat- ter of sinning, or not sinning against God; when we are preserved from doing a thing that is un- lawfull, which David calls, *leading in the paths of righteousness*, *Psal. 23. 3*. Secondly, there is a gui- dance, which is a matter of blessing and comfort to us, which is called, *feeding in faire pastures*. In the same *Psal. 23. 2*, and the second doth de- pend upon the first. If thou be contented to bee guided by the rules the Lord gives thee, hee will direct thee in the things that belong to thy owne comfort and advantage. *Psal. 25*; so the pro- mise runnes there, verse 12. *what man is he that fea-*

4  
Labour to  
please God.

*Jer. 42. 20.*

*Prov. 4. 6.*

*Psal. 23. 3.*

2  
*Psalm 23. 2*  
and the second

*Psal. 25. 5.*

reth the Lord: him will he teach, he may what he shall  
chose. (Him) that feares him, and keepes a good  
conscience in all things; our former care herein  
is that which stirreth up the Lord to guide us and  
direct us, in all our straites. There is a time when  
the Lord hath need of thy service; if thou wilt  
not faile him at his need, (as I may so speake) hee  
will not faile thee, when thou hast need of him in  
thy straites. And thus to have counsell given a  
man in such cases as doe nearely concerne him,  
and are of great weight, it is a great priviledge.  
And this thou shalt have, if thou wilt follow his  
counsell in other things. Therefore be exhorted  
upon this ground and motive to keepe thy heart  
more perfect with God.

The cause why *Abylon* and *Rehoboth* erred,  
was because they provoked the Lord formerly: and  
if thou beest also disobedient, this shall bee your  
punishment, that because you would not hearken  
to his counsell, therefore when thou needest coun-  
sell, even in those things that shall bee as much  
as thy life, thou shalt bee infatuated. The Lord  
hath made no promise to such a man, to shew him  
the way he should chose.

One thing must be added, and that is this, that  
in any particular case, thou must be ready to re-  
signe thy selfe up to the Lord, to take his counsell.  
Hee will not loose his labour, thou must have a  
heart that is plyable to him, and yeeld thy selfe  
up wholly to his disposing, and not let thy selfe  
to any way so; but that the Lord may take thee off  
in. Those among men that are governours

5  
Get a teach-  
able heart.

of

of others, are willing to bestow their labour on them that are pliable, but those that are of stubborn dispositions are a discouragement to them; they that *walk forwardly* with the Lord, the Lord will *walk forwardly* with them; therefore see thou resist him not in the passages of his providence, and take not the bit in thy mouth, and hold it in thy teeth, as one unwilling to bee guided. So it is, men are often set on a thing upon an humour, and they will goe this way, or that way, as they like, what ever come of it: but sometime the Lord in mercy barreth up the way, as we doe pits that are by the way side to keepe travellers from falling in, as they passe in the night. Woe finde sometimes the dore shut upon us in a course which we would enter into; sometimes he sets our conscience upon us to expostulate with us, even as the Angell did with *Hagar*, when she fled from her mistresse. *Gen. 16. 13, Hagar Sarabs maid*, sayes he, *whence comest thou, and whither wilt thou goe*; returne to thy dame, and humble thy selfe under her hands. As if he should have said; *Hagar*, thinke with thy selfe who thou art, *Sarabs maid*, it was her pride caused her to runne away, she thought to have beene mistresse, and because she could not beare the rough usage of her mistresse she had forgotten her place, therefore the Angell calls her *Sarabs maid*; and bids her, *Goe and humble thy selfe under her hands*, and likewise sayes he, consider whence thou comest, from the godliest family in all the world, and consider whither thou goest, to them that know not God, that are *stran-*

Gen. 16. 13.

gers and aliens from the common wealth of Israel, and therefore returne unto thy Dame. So the Lord sometimes sets our consciences to expostulare with us, why doe you refuse such a course, and why doe you take such a course: and it shewes us the cause of our errings, as here the Angell did Hagar, for pride of heart was the cause of her flying from her mistress, therefore the Angell sayes, Hagar, Sarahs maid, goe and returne unto thy mistress, and humble thy selfe under her hands; doe not as Iohanna did when he sent to aske counsell of the Lord, whether he should goe into Egypt or no, resolve aforhand what thou wilt doe, tieer downe with himselfe, that whatsoever the Lord had said, hee would goe downe into Egypt. So it is with many, though they aske counsell of the Lord, by prayer, their hearts are set upon a course, and will not be taken off. Take heed of this stiffness of disposition and frowardnesse of spirit, which is a frequent cause and a cause of much misgovernance in mens actions, and resign thy selfe to the Lord, and seeke counsell in the uprightness and plainnesse of thy heart: this resignation of our selves to the Lord, is the way to be directed upon all occasions.

Now to worke your heart to this, consider that the way God leads thee to; how improbable soever it seems, it wil be the best and safest way for thee. Many would goe the contrary way: As *Dor*, when the Lord would have him see to the mountaine, he would goe to *Zoar*, against Gods counsell, and you see what came of it. So *David* for the



numbring of the people, though better counsell  
was given him by *Isaiah*. But hee was set upon it, he  
would doe it, and see what came of it. So *Isaiah*  
would fight with *Pharaoh-Necho*, though better  
counsell was sent him from the Lord, to passe by  
him, and let him alone: see what came of it. Ther-  
fore take heed of this stiffenesse of affection, and  
wilfulnesse, and stubbornnesse of Spirit. The  
Lord may sometime give way to thy mind, but  
it is in judgement, not in mercy: the thing which  
thou hast a mind to, it may be brought to passe, but  
it had beene better for thee to want it, as it had  
been for *Balaam*, but hee would needs goe up to  
*Balaac*, and therefore the Lord bad him goe in his  
anger, seeing hee would not be staid. He deales  
with us as *Elisba* did with those, *2 Kings 4. 43*: *That*  
*would goe to seeke the body of Eliab, they had many de-*  
*nyals, but yet they were instant with him, so that in the*  
*end, he bad them goe, and they went, and lost their la-*  
*bour, for they found him not.* In all cases of difficulty  
learne to seeke counsell of the Lord.

These conditions observed, you shall have the  
use of this priviledge.

Another use is this, let every man learne from  
hence to be the glory of Christ. How is this drawn  
from thence; you will say: I will say: you looke into  
that place in the *1. Cor. 11. 3*. See how it fol-  
lowes upon it. Christ is the head of every man,  
and the man is the womans head, as is before in  
the Chapter, what followes upon that? in the  
seventh verse, he sayes, the man is the image and  
glory of God, and the woman is the glory of the

*Vse. 3.*

To give  
glory to  
Christ.

*1. Cor. 11. 7.*



man. The meaning is this, when thou dost consider that the *Lord* is thy husband, and thy head, thou must thinke of this with thy selfe, and every time thou findest that passage in Scripture, it should put thee in mind to cary thy selfe so as thou mayst be the glory of the *Lord*, that is, thou must take heed of standing on thine owne bottome, and seeking glory to thy selfe, and of shining with thine owne beames, seeking any selfe-excellency; but as it is in the civill law, *Mulier coruscat radiis mariti*, the woman must shine with the beames of the man, that is, she must challenge nothing as her owne, but every thing shee seekes or stands for, it is in the name of her husband, therefore whatever thou hast beene, or ever thou hast sought honour to thy selfe, and applause, and to be thought some body in the world, yet now thinkest thus with thy selfe, I am the Lords now, I must give him all the praise, and cary my selfe so, that all my excellency may reflect upon him. And this also, that we are members, is also argument enough for it. What can the members doe? there is agility in them to doe many actions, but where have they all their vigour? is it not from the head? So all the wit, and learning thou hast, those excellencies thou hast, whence hast thou them? are they not from Christ? the members doe that they do, but in an instrumentall manner, so dost thou, what ever thou dost. Therefore consider this, and say heartily, it is not I that doe this or that, but the grace of God in me, I doe but *assuagere*, it is the influence of my head; Christ hath wrought it by me,

me, as *Paul* said, that phrase is to be marked which is used in *Galat. 2.* Hee that was mighty by *Peter* in the Apostleship over the circumcision, was also mighty by me towards the Gentiles. The Apostle doth not say, that he, or *Peter* was able to doe any thing, but ascribeth all to the *Lord*. So thou shouldest thinke with thy selfe, never say, I have done such a thing, or brought such a thing to passe, or such an excellent performance hath come from me, but say, the *Lord* hath done such a thing by me. In other things you doe it, when you see an instrument well plaid on, you commend not that, but him that useth it: that is the case of every man; wee are but the Lords instruments, he is mighty by us, wee are but acted by the Lord. If Christ be the Head, thou must seeke his glory: this the Lord is jealous of. Sacrilege God, will not take at the hand of any man, he will not be robd of his time, the Sabbath or any thing else, but of all other he can least away with this theft, robbing him of his glory, and yet as that is most tender to him, so our fingers are more itching after that. A man is greedy of applause, and if hee looke not narrowly to himselfe, is ready to take the glory to himselfe that belongs to the Lord. Thou must be the Lords glory, but if thou take any to thy selfe, and if thou stand on thy owne bottome, thou art thy owne glory, and not his: therefore above all things take heede of being deceived and found guilty herein. But you will say, how may I come to know it? First, consider what thy end is in thy actions, whether the demonstration of some gift  
God

God hath given thee, or for his glory, and if thou findest not out thy end, yet consider whether in matter or manner of doing, thou dost not steppe out of the way: if not by this, yet consider after the action is done, when any thing is well performed by thee, whether thy heart beginne not to swell in thee, that is, to thinke better of thy selfe than before, that is a signe thou takest something to thy selfe, that belongs to the *Lord*. And when a man takes that to himselfe which is the *Lords*, hee is not the glory of the Lord. If not by this, then,

Lastly, consider whether thou art more troubled for that discredit that comes to thy selfe, or the dishonour that redounds to the Lord upon thy miscarriage at any time, consider how thou art affected with any thing. One step further, you must goe, and that is, not onely to take nothing to your selves, but likewise so behave your selves that you may be an honour to God by shewing forth the graces of Christ, that the *Lord* may boast of you, as he did of *Iob*. *Iob*. 1. 8. I say thou must cary thy selfe so, as the Lord may glory in thee, say to Sathan of thee, as he did to him of *Iob*: seeest not such a man in such a towne, in such a place, how zealous he is, how holy: be not a shame and reproach to him, but a praise: hee lookes for this from his Saints, and therefore wearesthem as signets on his right hand. As great men weare diamonds, and precious stones, and jewels in their eares, about their necks, and in their rings, to adorne and beautifie them: so the servants of the Lord, are *his jewels* that he weares to make him glorious

glorious in the eyes of men: great men are known by their Jewells, and so is the Lord by his Saints. Therefore it is a great motive to keepe thy selfe unspotted of the world, to cary thy selfe so, that his name may be honoured, and his Gospell well spoken of: the glory of Christ is engaged in thy cariage, let it be such as becommeth the Gospell.

Againe, if Christ be the head of every man, then try and consider from hence what thy condition is. If he be the head of the Church, no man within the compasse of the true Church, but is a member of Christ. Consider whether thou be a member of his body, one that is guided by his Spirit or no: but how shall we know that?

First by this, thou shalt find the same Spirit that is in Christ living and breathing in thee; thou shalt finde the same disposition, and antipathy, and affections to be in thee, that are in him; abhorring that evill, and cleaving to that good he doth; for the body of the tree and the branches are not of different natures: therefore consider what *similitude* is betweene the Lord and thee. So soone as thou art a living member, the same spirit is sent into thy heart, and insinuates it selfe into thy soule; and makes it conformable to Christ in all things. As the fire insinuates it selfe into the iron, and makes it like it self: *He that is in Christ, is made a new creature, and partakes of the divine nature, and is like him in all things.* But if this be the rule, I feare my condition, for I finde many contrary dispositions in mee to his Word, and contrary to Christ.

Use. 4.

To trie if we be members of Christ.

I

Quest.

Ans.

1 Cor. 6. 15,  
16.

Rom. 6. 1, 2.

Christ. *Ans.* Thou maist finde many rebellious in thee, and yet the same disposition remaine in thee, that is, in Christ. There may be swellings in the members, but yet there is a disposition of health, and strength, and vivacity that weares them out. 1 Cor. 6. 15, 16. *Know you not that your bodies are members of Christ?* Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid, &c. that is, it is impossible it should be so, it is like that speech in Rom. 6. 1, 2. *Shall wee consume in sinne, &c. how shall wee that are dead &c. live any longer therein?* That is, as it is impossible for him that is dead to sinne, to live therein: so it is impossible for him that is a member of Christ, to be made the member of an harlot. Why what say you to Davids case, that fell into adultery? *Ans.* Though he did, he was not made the member of an harlot. For therefore you shall finde in the 16. verse, *hee that is glued,* for so the word in the originall signifies, that is, adhereth to an harlot, out of the inward sway of his heart, gives his minde to any sinne, hee cannot be a member of Christ: though he that is a member may fall into many sinnes, yet hee is not *glued*, nor knit to any sinne, for then hee could not be a member of Christ: for if hee bee so, hee is of the same spirit or body. Now it is impossible to be of the body of Christ; and of a contrary body too. If a man have his heart *glued* to any sinne, he is not a member of Christ, be it a matter of credit, learning, pleasure, or delight, any lust, if thy heart be glued to it, and thou canst

not get them asunder, thou art not a member of Christ. For they are not wedded to any sin, but there is a divorce between every member of *Christ* and sinne, though they may fall one upon another, and touch each, yet they are of a mouldering nature, they will not cleave together. For he that is of God is in Christ, and hath the nature of Christ in him, that will not suffer him to sin. As take water and oyle, they may violently be shaken together, and they will seeme to be mixed together, and to be one, but they will not continue so long, there is no coalition, because they are of divers natures; and the one remains water still, and the other oyle: so he that is in Christ cannot cleave to any sinne, though sin and he may touch sometime, yet they are strangers, they cannot stand together, they cannot cleave one to another.

Besides, consider the manner of thy obedience, all that are Christs, obey him, after that manner that the members doe the head. The headship of Christ is not an imaginary thing; he is not like the politicke head of a body, but he is like a naturall head, that is, there comes a naturall true living influence from Christ to his members, that workes upon their hearts and wils, as the head doth on the members. There is a force that infuses it selfe from Christ unto them, that moves them to obedience. Members, they are not moved by argumentation, by reasons and arguments, but by a certaine force that comes from the head, and from a propensnesse that is in them: so those that are Christs, are not moved by reasons simply

to obedience. My meaning is, not that reasons are excluded, for they have motives and arguments to move them as well as others, but that is not all; there is a proclivitive planted in them, that makes them obedient to their Head **CHRIST IESUS**. Consider those words, *Rom. 6. 13. Wherefore give up your members as weapons of Righteousnesse unto God*, that is, so soone as a man is dead to sinne and made alive to Christ, consider now you are made members of another body, have another head, and therefore as the members are obedient to the Head, and ready to doe what ever that will have them do: so be you ready to doe what ever Christ commands. As when the Head would have a thing done, the members do it willingly without any reluctancy, consider whether thy obedience be of that nature: other men are drawne to it by outward motives from the force of Arguments and Reasons, but they want this inward propensnesse to bee guided by Christ, as the members are guided by the Head.

Lastly, consider whether thou seek thy selfe, or the good and advantage of others. For look what being a man hath, what state or condition in the Church, what frame of spirit within, such are his desires. So long as a man is not a member, but alone, so long he seekes the perfection of himselfe, as alone; but being a member, he seekes his good as he is a fellow member with the rest; his condition is altered, there comes another spirit into him that gives him the disposition of a member: and the well-being of a member, is not to be alone, but



to be knit to the other members, and to be knit together with them to the Head.

The Characters of a member are, first to be sociable, it is not the property of a member to bee alone, if thou bee knit unto *Christ*, thou canst not want fellowship with Christians, with the members of *Christ*. As a member of the body, if there be any disjoynure made, it seekes to be knit again: so every one that is a member, cannot endure to want the fellowship of *Christ*; if a cloud come betwixt *Christ* and him, hee cannot rest till hee be made one with him againe, or of the rest of the Saints, which are his fellow members.

Secondly, another disposition of a member is to be usefull and serviceable to the body and the rest of the members, as the hand, the eye, and the eare, in its place. So it is with every one that is a member of this body, whereas before he sought himselfe, and considered what did redound to himselfe, what profit, or credit, now the case is altered, and his thoughts are, How shall I doe any thing which may glorifie my Head, and advantage my fellow members? How shall I bee usefull to God and man?

Lastly, a member is compassionate, hath a fellow-feeling of what befales any of the rest of the members, it weepes with them that weepe &c that is, it useth to bee affected with the good or with the evill, that concernes the body of the Church, or any member of it, and this is a natular disposition that followes the nature of all members, and the spirit that is in them. As Saint

*Paul*

Characters  
of a mem-  
ber.

I

2

3

*Paul* sayes, who is offended, and I burne not with griefe and sorrow for it? I feelee twinges when others are hurt. Consider how thou art affected with the case of the Church, whether thou finde bowels of compassion in thee, and art able to take their cause to heart, and is thy heart stirred in thee, accordingly as thou seest it goe well or ill with the Church? If so, thou hast the dispositions of a member, and then Christ is thy head, and all the promises made to the body of Christ, the Church, belong to thee, otherwise thou hast no interest in him.

**FINIS.**

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Kk *Assu-*

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FINIS.

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Perlegi has Conciones, dignasq; iudico  
quæ typis mandentur.

*Tbo. Weekes, R. P. Episc. Lond.  
Cap. domest.*

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